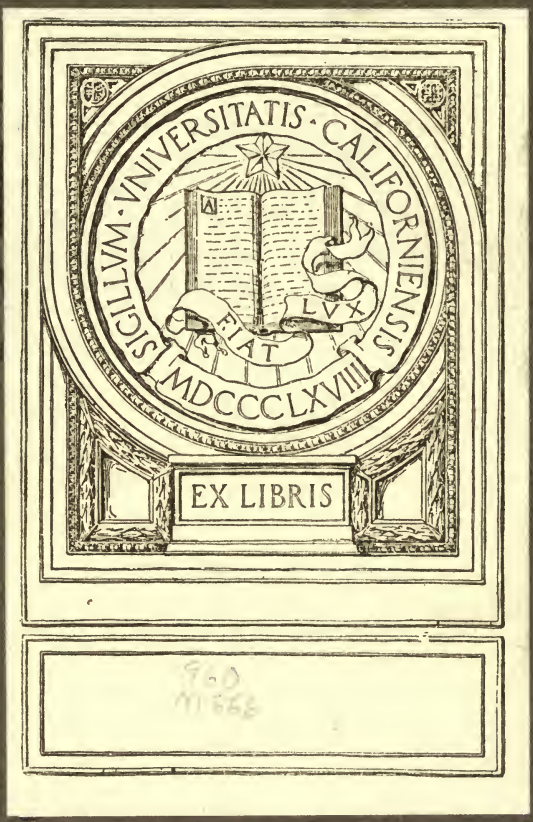
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THE MORNINGSIDE PLAYS

Hattie:
by Elva De Pue

One a Day:
by Caroline Briggs

Markheim:
by Zellah MacDonald

The Home of the Free:
by Elmer L. Reizenstein

With an introduction by
BARRETT H. CLARK

FRANK SHAY AND COMPANY
NEW YORK

The Morningside Plays

Uniform with this Series:

The PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

First Series:

Bound East For Cardiff. By Eugene G. O'Neill.
The Game. By Louise Bryant.
King Arthur's Socks. By Floyd Dell.

Second Series:

Suppressed Desires. By George Cram Cook and Susan Glaspell.

Third Series:

The Two Sons. By Neith Boyce.
Lima Beans. By Alfred Kreymborg.
Before Breakfast. By Eugene G. O'Neill.

Fourth Series:

Sauce for the Emperor. By John Chapin Mosher.

THE MORNINGSIDE PLAYS

HATTIE
A drama, by Elva De Pue.

ONE A DAY
A fantasy, by Caroline Briggs.

MARKHEIM
A dramatization by Zellah Macdonald.

THE HOME OF THE FREE
A comedy, by Elmer L. Reizenstein.

With an Introduction by
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NEW YORK
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1917

Introduction

The Morningside Players came into existence a few months ago as the result of a definite need on the part of a few persons who were interested in the making, producing, and witnessing of plays. It is not the purpose of *The Morningside Players* to add another burden to the long-suffering public, to uplift the drama, to exploit any particular movement or group of dramatists; the *Players* are not a zealous group of reformers eager to resuscitate the art of the past or discover the drama of the future; they refuse to ally themselves with any coterie or individual. These people, amateurs for the most part, had been writing plays for some years, and while they were fully aware that the mere writing of plays might in itself be of value and interest, their work would probably be rendered fruitless unless it was produced. The sporadic amateur production, under auspices which would be none too favorable, was not sufficient incentive to urge them further, and they decided to organize an association whose business it should be to produce the best of their plays, with the collaboration of such professionals as would lend their services, at some down-town theater, looking forward meanwhile to a playhouse of their own.

Early in the present year Mr. Hatcher Hughes, of Columbia University, together with two or three of his pupils and two others organized *The Morningside Players*. At that meeting the aims and policy were set forth in the following words:

" . . . It is not the purpose of the members to confine their production to works of University students or to limit membership to those connected with the University.

Rather, *The Morningside Players* desire to coordinate the dramatic interests of the University with the commercial play-producing field and by so doing to raise the standard of plays which are being produced, and to give the theater-going public an opportunity to see the best plays possible."

The policy has been further expanded and the field widened, so that anyone who is willing to cooperate as actor, playwright, or manager, may offer his services. The *Players* have realized that no experimental theater movement can hope for any sort of success unless it is founded on the truest sort of democracy: they seek the best, wherever it can be found.

The first production took place at the Comedy Theater on Sunday night, February 11, and was followed by a repetition of the bill on Tuesday afternoon, February 13. The play was *The Iron Cross,* in four acts, by Elmer L. Reizenstein, author of *On Trial.* It was produced under the direction of the author and Mr. Will Hutchins.

The next bill (produced April 24th and 25th) composed of the four plays which are printed in the present volume, will serve to show something of the varied interests and eclectic ideals of the *Players* long plays, one-acters, tragedy and comedy, fantastic, romantic, naturalistic—all will find a place on their programs.

The future of this organization, which is fortunate in having the cooperation of Miss Mary Shaw as producer, will of course depend on the attitude of those in charge. If they adhere to their program, if they continue to welcome new work that is sincere and interesting, no matter whence it comes, they cannot but fulfil a task which the commercial theater has failed to accomplish; and their work will be at an end when the commercial manager comes to realize that with intelligence and a little faith he can experiment with his playwrights and his public.

BARRETT H. CLARK.

HATTIE

A Drama

By ELVA DE PUE

HATTIE

Original Cast appearing
in the first production at the Comedy Theatre,
New York, April 22nd, 1917

CHARACTERS

HATTIE ..... SOPHIE WILDS
MINA ..... CLARICE MCCAULEY
MRS. SCROGGINS ..... MILDRED HAMBURGER
TIM ..... ROBERT A. PINES
HEINRICH ..... ROGER WHEELER

Hattie

Time: The Present.

SCENE: Room in a New York tenement. At the back of the stage a cot in left corner, and next it a mattress made up as a bed. On the right a cupboard and a table. On the left an old bureau. A door at the back leads into the next room; a door at the right into the hall. Across the hall from it are supposed to be the outside door to the street and a window. A woman comes in hurriedly from the hall. She is a small, bright German, whose hair at first appears to be gray, but turns out to be flaxen. When excited, she has an accent. She goes hastily to the door in the back of the stage.

MINA: (*Calls*) Mrs. Scroggins! Oh, Mrs. Scroggins! (*A tall woman opens the door and gestures to silence Mina. She has a long neck that stretches forward, near-sighted eyes with which she is always examining what is nearest, and a parrot nose. She has in her hand a brown blanket.*)

MRS. SCROGGINS: Sh . . . ! He's asleep. You don't want him hollering all evening, do you?

MINA: I'll just take a look at him. (*She slips past Mrs. Scroggins into the other room.*)

MRS. SCROGGINS: (*Tossing the blanket on the mattress*) Aw, shucks! He's all right . . . if you'd let him alone. (*Mina reappears smiling, closing door carefully*)

MRS. SCROGGINS: Well, I ain't hurt him, have I? Where's Hattie? I want to talk to her . . . I thought you two worked in the same laundry.

MINA: She stayed behind for something to-night. She wouldn't tell me. . . . You know how quiet she is. I just had to run ahead and see if my baby was all right. (*She takes off her cape and battered hat and hangs them on hooks over the mattress.*)

MRS. SCROGGINS: (*Huffily*) All right! I ain't going to eat him. . . . Here's your blanket. But now let me tell you something . . . if you expect to stay right along here as a steady thing, Hattie's got to pay me more for this room. You said when you come you was going to stay *a few days*. A few days! It's been *some* few! Nearly three weeks.

MINA: (*Blinking rapidly*) Ah, Mrs. Scroggins, you ain't goin' to put up the rent on her! Every day I think I hear dot my Heinrich has got a job. Sure I thought it was goin' to be a few days!

MRS. SCROGGINS: You Germans, you think you just about own the country! Here I been takin' care of your squallin' kid for only fifty . . .

MINA: (*Pleadingly*) I'll pay you a little more for that . . . lemme see . . . only I don't want to get Hattie into trouble. Mrs. Scroggins, please don't say nothin' to her

. . . she's been so good to me. I wasn't used to workin' right along at one job . . . them irons seemed so heavy to me . . . You see, little Heinie ain't only six months old, and I give out, the first day . . . Hattie, she was the only one was sorry for me . . . she brought me here to stay so's I could be pretty near to my work.

MRS. SCROGGINS: Yes, you and her's been as thick as thieves . . . (*Suddenly*) . . . What'd you go and turn her against my son Tim, for? Hey? That's what I'd like to know! (*The door opens and Hattie comes in. She is a big, raw-boned girl, seemingly gruff. She has had few friends and seems shy and suspicious. She looks defiantly at Mrs. Scroggins. She is carrying three packages, which she lays down. Mrs. Scroggins approaches them, peering curiously.*)

MRS. SCROGGINS: (*In a conciliatory tone*) Well, here you are! Been shoppin'?

HATTIE: (*Shortly*) Where's the baby?

MINA: Oh, he's in there sleepin' just fine . . . I thought I wouldn't wake him up. (*Hattie goes into the next room. Mina has thrown herself on the cot in an attitude of exhaustion. Mrs. Scroggins wanders about aimlessly, Hattie comes back. She notices Mrs. Scroggins eyeing the packages and removes her things deliberately. Finally she undoes one bundle, a loaf of bread. She starts to put it in the cupboard, then puts it out on the table instead. With it she sets out some sausage.*)

MRS. SCROGGINS: (*No longer able to contain herself, pokes the large bundle*) What you got here, Hattie?

HATTIE: (*Sheepishly*) Nothin'.

MRS. SCROGGINS: (*With withering sarcasm*) Seems to take a terrible lot o' good paper to do up nothin' in! (*Hattie looks at her sullenly. There is nothing left to do but to open the package. It is a baby's tin bath tub. Mina gives an exclamation of pleasure. While Mrs. Scroggins is examining the tub, bottom side up, Hattie slips the third package in the bureau drawer.*)

MRS. SCROGGIN: For the land's sakes! The way you do for that child . . . you'd think he was your first born, 'stead of another girl's . . .

MINA: (*Sitting up, much enlivened by the good fortune of acquiring a tub.*) Ach, I must go to phone to the grosmutter . . .

MRS. SCROGGINS: To who?

MINA: She's . . . Why, my husband's mutter . . . She's been takin' care of my other children ever since . . .

MRS. SCROGGINS: Your other children?

MINA: (*Proudly*) Sure! I got two nice girls . . . one can't see so very good, but she's getting better . . . and one more boy . . . Say, Hattie, you got two nickels for this dime? (*Hattie gets them from her coat pocket*)

MRS. SCROGGINS: For the love o' Gawd! And you so little and sick like . . .

MINA: Oh, I ain't really sick! (*She puts on her dingy cape but no hat and goes out*)

MRS. SCROGGINS: (*Spitefully*) You see here, Hattie . . . You're throwin' money around on other people's brats, when you ought to be havin' some of your own. (*Hattie, putting coffee on the stove to heat, turns suddenly and stares at the other woman*) And you can up and pay me a dollar more for this here room; understand? You make good wages . . . I heard tell you was one of the best workers they got, doin' that fancy ironin'. (*She pauses for breath. Hattie looks at her steadily without answering. Annoyed at not feeling justified in her demands, Mrs. Scroggins tries to work herself up into a fit of indignation*) What on earth did you get yourself all mixed up with her for, anyhow?

HATTIE: (*Muttering*) The work was too hard for her.

MRS. SCROGGINS: Well, you fool, you can't afford to start a hospital for all the laundry girls that ain't feelin' like workin', can you? (*Hattie makes no reply, which irritates Mrs. Scroggins, who cannot understand anyone not liking to talk*) What on earth's the matter with you lately, anyhow? You go around with your jaw hangin' . . . like this . . . (*Makes a face denoting dejection*) Why can't she help you pay for the room . . . She makes good money at that laundry, too, I bet.

HATTIE: (*Drily*) Good money!

MRS. SCROGGINS: (*Stamping her foot*) You drive me crazy just repeating what I says! Why don't she pony up, I'm askin'?

HATTIE: (*In a low tone*) Sends it to the other kids. Husband's lost his job.

MRS. SCROGGINS: Oh, yes. That's what she's tellin' you, I know. I guess, maybe, there ain't no more husband than there is a job! Ha! Ha!

HATTIE: (*Hotly*) There is too! (*As they talk Hattie unconsciously draws near the door, for there is a noise of thumping outside, going along the hall. Hattie, drawn up tensely, keeps looking toward the door. The thumping passes without stopping. Her shoulders droop forward dejectedly*)

MRS. SCROGGINS: You seen him yourself?

HATTIE: (*With a start*) Seen him? Seen who?

MRS. SCROGGINS: (*With exasperation*) There you go again! Why don't you listen to what I'm sayin'? Seen her husband, of course.

HATTIE: (*Sullenly*) Naw! When he come, I was out with Tim.

MRS. SCROGGINS: Now you take my word for it, I've seen the world . . . I know these here soft spoken little chits . . .

VOICE OUTSIDE: Say, Maw!

HATTIE: (*Jumping*) That's Tim, ain't it? Why don't he . . . s-stop in here anymore?

MRS. SCROGGINS: I guess you know that as well as me.

HATTIE: What do you mean?

MRS. SCROGGINS: You know all right . . . I can tell by

the look on your face. What d'ye tell him you wasn't goin' with him no more unless he quit sellin' papers? D'ye think a sperrited feller like Tim is goin' to stand for that kind o' talk? He was doin' all right at it, too. You kep' at him till he nearly went an' tuk a job as bartend in O'Shaunessy's saloon down here at the corner . . . (*With a sneer*) . . . You're so high and mighty . . . too good for him, eh?

HATTIE: (*Tensely, with clenched fists*) No, no. That wasn't it at all. I wanted him to get a better job, something that would get him on . . . so as . . . so as . . . I didn't want him to be a bartend, though.

MRS. SCROGGINS: Yes, so as to have money to throw around on you.

HATTIE: No, no . . . so as we could . . . get married . . . sometime.

MRS. SCROGGINS: He works hard enough. He was willing to marry you on what he's getting.

HATTIE: That's not enough! You know that's not enough! Why look at Mina . . . she says . . .

MRS. SCROGGINS: (*Furiously*) That Mina! I knowed it was her turned you against him!

HATTIE: (*Slowly*) I saw . . . from her . . . you got to be careful.

MRS. SCROGGINS: Careful? Tim would make any girl a good husband! There's plenty as thinks so too.

HATTIE: (*On the verge of breaking down*) I didn't go

to make him mad. I just spoke of the delicatessen shop . . . they need a clerk there. Tim's so smart . . . he could . . . he could . . . I hate to have him have to borrow money off of me.

MRS. SCROGGINS: (*Hotly*) See here! Don't you come a-complainin' of Tim to me! I've always humored him with his lameness and all . . . I ain't goin' to have no abusin' of him. You're too old for him anyways . . . He's got another girl now.

HATTIE: (*With effort*) Who do you mean?

MRS. SCROGGINS: That Sadie Horst . . .

HATTIE: (*Shrilly*) That . . . that little . . . she . . . she makes eyes at every feller . . .

MRS. SCROGGINS: Shut up your insults. She ain't makin' eyes at Tim. . . . She means business.

VOICE: (*From back*) Say, Maw, what about supper? Do I get it or don't I?

MRS. SCROGGINS: (*Annoyed*) I'm *comin'*, if you'll wait a second. (*She goes out, reopens the door and sets a clothes basket on the mattress with a bump. Hattie stares at the door a moment, then runs to the basket, takes out the baby, holds him close, hiding her face. Through the window comes the glow of a street lamp. Pause. Mina opens the door and enters*)

MINA: Hattie! Ach, there you are! Why don't you light the gas? (*Mina finds a match, lights the gas in center*

of the room. She hangs up her cape and holds out her arms for the baby)

HATTIE: (*In a husky voice*) Say, Mina, can't I . . . fix him and give him a bath to-night? It kind o' takes my mind off of . . .

MINA: (*Solicitously*) Why, Hattie, what's been happening? Mrs. Scroggins . . . did she . . . did she stay long after I went out? (*Indignantly*) Did she sass you about the rent or anything?

HATTIE: (*Bends over the baby but does not answer*)

MINA: (*Putting an arm over Hattie's shoulder*) That Tim . . . Has he been bothering you again?

HATTIE: (*Throwing off Mina's arm; in a tearful voice*) Botherin'? Not likely he'll bother me no more! He's got another girl.

MINA: Another girl! How do you know? Did he tell you?

HATTIE: No, Mrs. Scroggins did. (*Suddenly*) You never did like Tim! I wish I'd never listened to you.

MINA: Mrs. Scroggins! Ach, she just tries to make you jealous! Don't you pay no attention to that.

HATTIE: (*Wistfully, wanting to be convinced*) Do you think that's it?

MINA: (*Heartily*) Sure! Don't you see? She wants that Tim to get you. She wants him to have an easy time . . . to live off of you instead of off of her. She was as

sweet as honey cakes to you till you had that fight with him . . . now she's a little grouchy.

HATTIE: (*Her spirits rising somewhat*) We'd ought to be a-givin' him his bath. (*Mina gets the tub and fills it in the hall. She kneels on the other side of it from Hattie*)

MINA: Tim, he yust waitin' for you to make up with him.

HATTIE: (*Undressing the baby*) Don't you be too sure. Fellers here ain't so faithful as they are . . . some places.

MINA: Well, if you want to make up with him, you stick to what I told you . . . You tell him you won't marry him without enough to bring up a family on. . . . You better give him to me, your hand is shaky. (*Hattie hands her the child, cooing to him*) . . . Look, he's getting fat . . . just since I come here to you.

HATTIE: (*In a dull voice*) Aw, you needn't worry about me and Tim. We ain't goin' to make up.

MINA: (*To the baby*) Ach, you was a little kicker! Yust see him kick . . . Hattie, you're awful touchy. I noticed it with the girls at the laundry. You seemed like you was scared of Tim.

HATTIE: (*Shamefacedly*) Always think people ain't goin' to like me . . . I feel so kind o' awkward and ugly. (*She gets a towel for Mina*)

MINA: Ach, no, you ain't so bad. (*She blinks at her friend in embarrassment*)

HATTIE: Now you, you're friendly to all of 'em, and you make me feel right to home with you.

MINA: Anyway, you got the best heart of 'em all. When I was so sick, it was you who took me home. The others said they was sorry, but they shied off, I noticed . . . (*Wiping the child*) . . . He was pretty weak when he was born, but I think he's gaining all right now.

HATTIE: (*Hesitatingly*) The other ones, are they strong?

MINA: (*After a moment*) The two oldest, they are. I had a little girl that died, and then little Elsa, I had an awful time with her . . . poor little thing . . . I used to wish I could feel the pains for her.

HATTIE: (*With her face buried, shuddering*) Yes, it don't seem fair for them to start out without a chance . . . ain't it funny? Those that have 'em don't want 'em, always . . . and there's other people, that hasn't anybody of their own . . .

MINA (*Reflectively*) It's mighty different here from on a farm in the old country. Here you haf to like a feller pretty much before you want to take a chance on all the trouble . . . (*In a more cheerful voice*) . . . Now my Heinrich, he's so different to most of the Americans. I don't mind the trouble . . . if we . . . if we could only stay together. (*She puts the baby in the basket and takes the tub away to empty it*)

HATTIE: Do you think he will find something soon?

MINA: Oh, yes, I know he will. He tries so hard . . . I yust know how crazy he is for to get us all together again. (*Her face lights up and she looks much younger*)

HATTIE: (*Wistfully*) It must be fine to be so sure of anybody. You don't mind the hard work, if you think its getting you anywheres. (*Suddenly*) Now what am *I* workin' for, I'd like to know? What am I livin' for?

MINA: (*Alarmed by Hattie's unusual violence*) Ach, Hattie, you'll get somebody of your own . . . You'll feel better to-morrow, maybe.

HATTIE: Somebody! You can't understand why I like Tim . . . His shiftlessness just makes me like him all the more. I kind o' want to look out for him. It ain't his fault his mother spoiled him. And the way he grins, kind of to one side, and his blue eyes shinin', and all . . . I guess I'm a fool. (*She breaks down, sobbing hard*)

MINA: (*Patting her on the shoulder*) Say, he'll be comin' out from his supper pretty soon. (*She goes to the bureau and pokes about in the drawer. She holds up a little white dress, which she has taken out of the paper in which it was wrapped. To divert Hattie's mind.*) Did you do this, Hattie? When did you iron it? (*Hattie nods, wiping her eyes.*) When did you? It's just swell!

HATTIE: (*With an occasional sob*) After you left to-day. The boss let me use the fluter.

MINA: It's lovely. I put it on him the first time my Heinrich is to see him. (*She hunts further in the drawer and finally brings out a piece of bright green ribbon, which she takes to Hattie*)

MINA: I don't wear this now, try it on. (*Hattie shakes her head. A thumping is heard in the hall. Hattie sud-*

denly rouses herself, gets up and takes the ribbon. She ties it nervously around her neck, glancing now and then furtively in the little cracked mirror over the bureau. She wipes her eyes. The thumping goes into the hall. Mina opens the door, and motions Hattie towards it. Hattie, trembling, does not move, but shrinks back. Mina pulls her with all her might. They almost struggle. Hattie finally stands in the door, pressed against the casing. She breathes hard with a rigid face. Mina slips back and busies herself about the food)

HATTIE: (*Faintly*) Hello, Tim!

VOICE: (*Outside, carelessly*) Hello, Hat! (*He does not stop*)

HATTIE: (*With visible effort as he is passing*) Say, Tim, can't you come in . . . just a minute? (*Tim limps into the room, standing just inside the door. He is slightly shorter than Hattie, with reddish hair, blue eyes and a thin face, with a sarcastic smile which has an indefinable charm for girls, in spite of his infirmity. A short pause ensues, agonizing for Hattie, boring to Tim and unnoticed by Mina who is scanning Tim carefully*)

HATTIE: (*Choking a little*) Make you acquainted with my friend, Mrs. Kleber. (*Tim murmurs an inarticulate salutation, looking at the door*)

MINA: Can't you set down, Mr. Scroggins?

TIM: Naw, I can't . . . Got to see somebody . . . outside. (*He turns*)

HATTIE: (*With a gasp*) Right . . . right away?

MINA: (*Seeing how disturbed Hattie is*) Ach, stay awhile and eat somethin' . . . or have a cup of coffee.

TIM: (*Looking uncomfortably toward the door*) Naw, I can't sure . . . I just eat. I got a date . . . (*with a faint smile*)

HATTIE: (*Throwing her pride to the winds*) You don't ever . . . make dates with . . . with me, no more, Tim.

TIM: Whose fault's that?

HATTIE: Oh, Tim! I never meant to throw you down. I only wanted you to get another job . . . for your own good . . .

TIM: Yes, for my own good. Say, I can picture myself in the delicatessen joint there among the pickles and cheeses and sauerkraut! Nobody ever goes in there but fat old Dutch women. I'm off the Germans, I tell you. (*Hattie looks ready to faint.*) 'Stead of being outside with the fellers that sells for me, goin' where I please, seein' all that goes on, talkin' to all kinds of folks . . . that's my job, and it's as good or better than any . . . it's good enough for me.

MINA: But you don't get ahead.

TIM: (*Resenting Mina's interference and her knowledge of his having been repulsed*) Well, there's others as ain't so fussy about my gettin' ahead.

HATTIE: (*Taking a sharp breath and moving toward him.*) Tim, forget what I said. I don't care what you do . . . I . . . (*Tim, showing off before the other woman*

holds up his hand humorously to ward off Hattie. He smiles crookedly, not unkindly)

TIM: It's pretty late to come honeyin' round me now. How d'ye know I ain't goin' to get married . . . maybe this afternoon? There's somebody outside.

HATTIE: Tim . . . you're not . . .

TIM: (*Loftily*) Well, maybe I'll put it off a day or two . . . but I'm goin' to get hitched, all right . . . So long. (*He limps out with unusual speed. Hattie waits a moment, then runs after him. She calls him once but it is muffled in the bang of the door. She looks out the window in the hall and Mina hears her give a sharp ejaculation. Then she reenters the room, staggering a little, and tears the ribbon from her neck, dropping it and treading on it. She throws herself face downward on the mattress. For a moment Mina watches her with clasped hands and an agonized expression, not daring to speak*)

MINA: Hattie . . .

HATTIE: (*Frantically*) What did you make me see him for? What did you push me for? I'm so ashamed . . . Oh, I'm so ashamed.

MINA: (*In a small voice*) I . . . I knew you wanted to talk to him . . . Did you see who was outside? (*She blinks apprehensively at Hattie*)

HATTIE: (*Smothering her sobs in the bed*) That Sadie . . . that girl with the black eyes . . . Oh, oh! I always knew he would like somebody else.

MINA: (*Trying to soothe her*) Never mind, Hattie, he wasn't good enough for you anyway!

HATTIE: (*Bursting forth vehemently*) Not good enough! Not good enough! (*With a laugh like a scream*) . . . Who's good enough then? Who's good enough? Who's ever goin' to look at me? He's the only feller I ever had. It's better to have one like him than nobody at all. . . .

MINA: Ach, poor Hattie, I'm so sorry . . .

HATTIE: You, . . . you spoiled my last chance. You told me not to marry him . . . I was a coward . . . I was afraid . . . I can just see that Sadie's black eyes . . .

MINA: (*Feeling that she has brought disaster, and sobbing more than Hattie*) Ach, Hattie, an' you bin so good to me, too . . . (*She creeps up to Hattie and takes her hand. Seeing that Hattie does not resent it, she puts her arm about her and they cry together.*)

MINA: (*Sitting up trying to divert Hattie*) Say, we ain't ate our supper . . . (*Hattie makes no answer*) (*She takes the coffee from the stove and pours out a cupful*) Come on, Hattie, you better have a bite . . . (*Hattie shakes her head*) . . . A cup of this kaffee will do you good.

HATTIE: (*Drags herself up and leans over the basket*) He ain't had his . . . (*sobs*) . . . milk. (*Mina gets the baby's bottle, but Hattie takes it from her. She pours milk into a saucepan to heat. She goes into the hall to rinse the bottle then tries to fill it from the pan*) (*Turning suddenly to Mina*) How old are you?

MINA: (*Surprised*) I . . . guess I'm twenty-six.

HATTIE: (*Tonelessly*) You got four children, ain't you? . . . (*She lets the milk drip on the floor*) And I'm thirty-seven . . . thirty-seven years old, and . . .

MINA: (*Changing the subject*) Look out Hattie, all the milk is spilling. Leave a little in the pan, we can feed him again in the night . . . the way you did last night. Ach, Gott! How tired I was last night. Anyway Hattie, you got your strength!

HATTIE: (*Bitterly*) What good's that?

MINA: Last night when you was so good to get up and feed him, I thought for a minute I had my good Heinrich back. You bin so awful good, I'd like to help you sometime . . . I'd like to do something nice for you. (*Hattie gives the baby his bottle and stands watching him. Mina is putting away the food*)

HATTIE: Lemme take care of him then. (*There is a knock at the door. Hattie starts violently, runs toward it, then stops to get her breath.*)

HATTIE: (*In a loud whisper*) Did you hear anybody . . . come up . . . did you Mina? We was talkin' and maybe didn't hear . . .

MINA: (*Also agitated*) Open the door quick. (*The knock is repeated and Hattie opens the door, so that Mina does not at first see who it is. From Hattie's attitude Mina knows it is not Tim*)

VOICE: (*Outside*) Say, my wife Mina . . . she bin here? (*Mina runs to the door and pulls in a big man with clean*

skin and a shock of blond hair, his clothes those of a workman. Hattie draws back. The couple stand looking joyfully into each other's eyes, then Mina with a little cry throws her arms about his neck. Hattie turns away, bends over the basket, and seeing they do not notice her, picks up the baby. The two whisper and Heinrich's voive rises as he says something in German. He kisses his wife below the ear, and Mina smiles)

MINA: (*Remembering they are not alone*) Say Hattie, what do you think? He's bin and got a job in Brooklyn, driving a wagon for a big grocer. He's took a room already in Brooklyn, and he's got the wagon downstairs, right now to take us over in. He wanted to surprise me.

HEINRICH: Where's the little one? Ach, so, here he is. (*He takes the baby from Hattie clumsily*)

MINA: (*Delightedly*) Ain't he got fat, Heinrich?

HEINRICH: (*Beaming and laying the baby in the basket*) Oh, Mina, I brought some boxes that you can put your things in. You don't have to carry them in the shawl. I better go get them while you get ready. (*He goes out*)

MINA: (*Excitedly*) He thinks of every single thing. Ain't he a fine man? And so good. He says he got a job where they let him drive horses. (*She spreads her shawl and piles a few things in*) You see he lost his job before 'cause they changed the horses to having autos . . . he likes so much better to drive horses . . . . he likes them. (*She sees Hattie is not listening*)

HATTIE: (*In a high unnatural voice*) You goin' to take . . . the baby . . . away?

MINA: What you say?

HATTIE: You goin' to take . . . (*Pointing to the basket*)

MINA: (*In amazement*) Take my little Heinie? Why, what you think I do?

HATTIE: Couldn't you leave him . . . just a few days . . . till I got used to bein' alone?

MINA: Leave him here? How could I leave him here?

HATTIE: (*Desperately*) You said . . . maybe you'd do something for me . . . I'll be all alone, and . . .

MINA: (*After a pause, much concerned*) Yes, that's right . . . I been so happy, I forgot all about that.

HATTIE: You got all the others, and your husband . . .

MINA: (*Very doubtfully*) But I'm afraid . . . supposin' he gets sick, or . . .

HATTIE: I'll let you know right away. I know how to take good care of him. Oh, please, Mina.

MINA: (*Uncertainly, not knowing how to refuse*) Well, I'd like to do it for you, sure I would Hattie, but I got to see what Heinrich says.

HATTIE: He won't let me . . you beg him . . . can't you make him? (*She holds Mina's arm in a frantic grip.*

Heinrich enters with two large boxes. Hattie drops Mina's arm)

HEINRICH: Whew! I run up all them steps. Here's your trunks, Mina. (*Mina piles her belongings into the box, glances at her husband, but says nothing. She looks around the room to see if she has left anything. Hattie hands her a saucepan. Heinrich looks around, too, finds an empty baby's bottle and puts that in. Hattie stares at it, looking from it to Mina. Mina sees the tin bath tub, which she does not take*)

HEINRICH: (*Pleasantly unconscious of anything*) Well, you don't need so many trunks, eh?

MINA: (*Slowly*) Heinrich, Hattie, she been awful good to me.

HEINRICH: Much obliged to you Miss, I'm sure. It was fine for you and Mina to be company for one another. I'd like to pay you for half your room. How much do you give for it? (*Hattie shakes her head and mumbles*) Yes, yes, go ahead, I can afford to pay you. (*He sets the empty box on end by the door. Hattie looks at him appealingly*)

MINA: (*Not knowing how to begin*) Heinrich, she don't want the money, but . . .

HEINRICH: Well, if she won't have it . . . much obliged, Miss, I'm sure . . . Come on, Mina you bring Heinie, and I'll take this. (*He starts to take up the full box*)

MINA: (*Trying to gain time*) Maybe can't we stay here a little while longer?

HEINRICH: (*Straightening up*) Stay here? It's getting late and we got a long way to go.

MINA: Well, you see, Hattie, she's goin' to be awful lonesome. Maybe we could leave . . . little Heinie . . . with her.

HEINRICH: That's a good joke . . . leave little Heinie, eh? His father ain't seen him for some time.

MINA: No, but really, Hattie, she would like to keep him . . . just a little while she can feed him fine now.

HEINRICH: You giving away your baby? You're crazy, Mina?

MINA: Hattie, she goin' to be awful lonesome.

HEINRICH: What's the matter with you Mina? You ain't never complained about takin' care of the children before. How can she look out for him like his mother? (*More sternly*) You and she been havin' too easy a time, yes?

MINA: (*Reproachfully*) Ach, Heinrich.

HEINRICH: Now come on, no more nonsense!

MINA: (*More and more faintly*) But I promised her I would do something for . . .

HEINRICH: (*Used to being obeyed and getting angry*) Sure you can do something for her, but not give her your child, Gott in Himmel!

MINA: (*Breathing fast*) Not for one night?

HEINRICH: Why don't she get an orphan, if she don't want a family of her own? (*Mina tries to stop him, but he raises his voice*) There's too many unmarried women in this country. All they want is an easy time . . . no responsibility. (*Hattie has drawn further back in the room. Heinrich takes the child summarily, and the box under the other arm and stalks out of the room. Mina, with alarm goes toward Hattie, who stares at her fixedly. Mina murmurs* "Good bye, Hattie, Good bye, I . . . I'll come and see you." *Hattie does not answer and Mina slips out. The baby cries, Hattie listens and takes a few steps toward the door. She turns and looks about the room, sees the green ribbon on the floor, picks it up and starts across the room, stumbles over the bath tub, picks it up, stands holding it for a moment, and then lets it fall with a clatter and throws herself across the mattress*)

CURTAIN

ONE A DAY

A Fantasy

By CAROLINE BRIGGS

ONE A DAY

Original Cast appearing in the first production at the Comedy Theatre, New York, April 22, 1917

CHARACTERS

G. BERNARD S. FLANAGAN ..... ROGER WHEELER
GERMAN PRISONER ..... S. S. MCDANIEL
PRINCE OF WALES ..... ORMOND V. GOULD
'ENRY 'ARRIS ..... JOHN MCINERNEY
JERRY DUNN ..... EDWARD J. SCHOENBROD

One A Day

PLACE: *A trench somewhere in France.*

(*The curtain goes up disclosing a very dark stage. Gradually there becomes visible at the back the sand bags and general outlines of the ramparts of a trench. To the right of the stage toward the front is a covered shelter, between it and the rampart at the back is the opening of another trench. To the left continuation of gallery, also steps up to the top of the trench wall.*

It is night and the stars are the only apparent means of light. Two figures are seen under the shelter, one sitting in a constrained attitude leaning against the wall at right, the other stretched out at ease on his back, and if the sounds of snoring, which now become audible and undoubtedly emanate from him, are to be believed, he is asleep. The other in moving around falls on his side. His hands are seen to be tied, his feet also, and a handkerchief is over his mouth. As he can't straighten himself up he rolls over and over until he bumps into the sleeping figure).

FLANAGAN: (*Sitting up*) Can't you leave me be, William? What's the matter with ye rolling over and over like a rolling pin? Faith, it's the least you could be after doing to kape quiet while I was saying my prayers. Begorra! Perhaps ye wanted me to say a prayer for you.

Well, it's the devil a lick of a prayer I'd be saying for the likes of ye, ye old bag of bones. Shure it's the fine big nose ye have and a pair of mustaches like the old boy himself. Here let's have a bit of light so I can see your handsome face. (*Here he lights an oil lantern and places it on a stool by the prostrate man who makes an effort to sit up. The light discloses him to be a tall thin young man dressed in the grey uniform of a German soldier*)

FLANAGAN: (*Stands, with his hands on his hips looking at him*) Arrah! It's sit up you want. (*Making the motion of straightening up, the German nods*) So it wasn't a night attack at all, at all, but just a bit of a nudge to call me back from my conversation with the Holy Saints. Well! (*He stoops over and takes the German under the arms, drags him back again and sits him up against the sand bag wall of the shelter*) There ye are, my jolly German. (*The man makes grimaces, evidently wants the bandages taken off so he can speak. He looks anything but a "jolly German."*)

FLANAGAN: (*Eyeing him disapprovingly*) Ye needn't be making such pretty faces at me. I like ye just as ye are. I wouldn't be changing a thing about ye. Not a thing. Faith, I had trouble enough getting ye here all by myself. And I'll be leavin' ye just as ye are, Herman, until the guard comes. Ye poked yer head up once too often out of them rabbit holes of yours. There now, be quiet for a bit, while I speak to Saint Anthony. I've lost my pipe and I want him to find it for me. (*And Flanagan sits down and is preparing to roll himself up in his overcoat. A look of disgust is on the face of the German but*

he is apparently making a virtue of necessity and leans back against the wall watching Flanagan. The sound of a step is heard coming along the trench from the right. Flanagan springs to his feet in an instant and stands there, the model of a soldier on guard, as a man appears from the right and advances to the middle of the stage. He is evidently an English officer, is very slender and quite young. Flanagan stands at attention. He returns Flanagan's salute then holds out his hand. Flanagan looks at the hand and apparently does not know what to do about it)

OFFICER: (*Laughing*) Shake, comrade. (*Flanagan looks at him puzzled but puts out his hand and shakes hands, meanwhile eyeing him very carefully*)

OFFICER: (*Continuing*) A mere accident of birth put us where we are.

FLANAGAN: (*Hotly*) That's a true word. If we hadn't have been born, we couldn't have been here. But I'd like ye to know it was no accident with my mother, whatever it may have been with yours. She was married to my father before my older brother James Barrie was born.

OFFICER: There, there, my good man, no offence; it was a mere facon de parler. I meant that you are an Irishman and I the Prince of Wales. (*The prisoner has not been showing much attention until he hears "Prince of Wales." He looks most intently at the young officer as he stands in the center of the stage talking to Flanagan. His back is half turned to the German but his side face is quite distinctly visible to him in the light from the lantern. He*

seems quite moved by his scrutiny and sinks his head further down and away from the light.)

FLANAGAN: Arrah! It's proud I am to be what I am.

PRINCE: (*Looking at him with great interest*) Why should you be proud of it? You couldn't help being an Irishman any more than I could being Prince of Wales. I wish I could. (*Sorrowfully*)

FLANAGAN: (*Up on his tiptoes almost prancing with rage, having comprehended only the first half of the Prince's speech*) And yer askin' me why should I be proud of it? (*He sees the Prince eyeing him coolly and interestedly. It seems to quiet him*) Faith! I don't know why I should be proud of it!

PRINCE: (*Hastily agreeing, interrupts*) Ireland never did anything for you.

FLANAGAN: (*Interrupting in his turn*) And Wales doesn't do anything for you.

PRINCE: (*Hastily*) Oh yes it did. It gave me my investiture.

FLANAGAN: (*Reprovingly*) Well there! I call that downright ungrateful of you. Do you think——(*Here the conversation is broken upon by a snort from the German. Both men turn. The Prince seeing the German for the first time goes over to inspect him. The German again sinks his head, trying to keep his face from the light. Flanagan follows and both stand looking down on him*)

FLANAGAN: (*Raising his voice*) Hey there, Johnny

Boche, do ye understand English? (*As the German makes no sign of having understood, Flanagan bellows in his ear*) I'll give ye a prod with this here toastin' fork (*Showing his bayonet*) if ye don't answer. Understand? (*The German nods*)

PRINCE: Come let's have off the handkerchief. He probably talks English.

FLANAGAN: I'll not that. Faith! It's murdering the King's English he'd be. He'd think no more of murdering that than he'd think of murdering you or me, the heathen. If so be he got the chance.

PRINCE: Come, come, Pat. He couldn't help being a German any more than you could an Irishman, as I said before.

FLANAGAN: (*With dignity*) If you please, your honor my name is not Pat. It's George Bernard Shaw Flanagan, and I'm mostly called Flanagan.

PRINCE: (*Laughing*) Beg pardon, Flanagan. Sorry.

FLANAGAN: (*Forgivingly*) That's all right, your grace. You didn't know.

PRINCE: (*Turning to German*) It's a mere ac—arbitrary arrangement of Fate that he's there a German prisoner and I a free man talking to him.

FLANAGAN: And it was not that. Shure wasn't it I had the time catching him out there. And I'm only waiting for the guard to come to relieve me. Then I'll be after taking him back as a present to the general. (*Looking at*

the prisoner with interest) He's the only one I ever took whole. He hasn't a scratch, bless him! (*Patting the German on the head*) A little thin—but——

PRINCE: Come, Flanagan. What have you against him? He never did you a bit of harm. Come, let's untie him.

FLANAGAN: (*With decision*) That I'll not do, if ye were the King himself that asked me.

PRINCE: (*Looking sharply at the prisoner*) Please now, Flanagan. He looks like a Social Democrat. There are too few of them in Germany now, we mustn't make prisoners of them. I was telling Haig last Sunday at tea that we oughtn't to make any of the Social Democrats prisoners but send them back. That's the way to make public opinion. In a few years, you see, (*the Prince warming to his theme turns his back on the prisoner who looks up at him scowling*) all the Imperialists would be prisoners and the country could be run by the Democrats—and Cousin William and family retired to private life.

FLANAGAN: (*Who has been watching the German*) He may be a Democrat but I'll be hanged if he's Social. Are you a Democrat? (*Turning to the Prince*)

PRINCE: I'm a Democrat and a Socialist.

FLANAGAN: You're related to him on both sides of the house. I'm only a Democrat. I voted the Democrat ticket once in New York. I was there only six months. (*Reminiscently*)

PRINCE: (*With enthusiasm*) The States! If I could only be President! (*The prisoner has been listening in-*

tently and a look of horror grows on his face. At the last he becomes deadly pale and his head falls back against the wall as if he were overcome with faintness. The noise of advancing steps is heard coming from the left. Flanagan springs to attention and calls out)

FLANAGAN: Who goes there? (*A little undersized man comes in whom one recognizes as a Cockney before he opens his mouth. He is accompanied by a man who, as he appears, is seen to be busily writing on a tablet by the light of a little electric torch stuck under his arm. He is an American reporter, Jerry Dunn by name*)

DUNN: (*Without looking up*) And this is one of the most advanced and dangerous positions, you say?

HARRIS: All of that. (*He salutes Flanagan and starts back in mock surprise*) Who 'ave we 'ere! The bloomin' 'ero Flanagan! (*He claps him on the shoulder and as he does so catches sight of the Prince, but in the dim light does not see he is an officer*) Sy, introduce us to your pal, old top.

FLANAGAN: (*With a wave of his hand to the Prince*) His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales.

HARRIS: (*Taking it as a joke of Flanagan's, whips off his hat and makes a low bow with great empressment*) Most 'onored, your Royal 'ighness.

PRINCE: (*Stepping forward*) Come lad. Shake hands. We're but two men. (*Holds out his hand. Flanagan's repeating the name of the Prince of Wales evidently caught the ear of the American, who looks up sharply at the*

Prince, then thrusts his hand deep in the pocket of his coat and pulls out what, at first, looks like a pack of cards. He hastily goes through them, stops, takes out one, looks at it critically under his electric torch, then shoots the light of the torch on the Prince)

DUNN: (*Ecstatically holding one of the pack of cards which proves to be a postcard of the Prince of Wales*) It is, boys. It is the Prince of Wales. Here's his picture on this postcard and he's the spittin' image of it. Ah, your Highness, this is too much luck. To get out to the furthese trenches and to meet your Highness! This is too much luck for Jerry Dunn!

PRINCE: (*Interestedly*) Who's Jerry Dunn?

DUNN: (*Taking out a business card and handing it to him*) I am, Your Highness. I'm (*He reads from the card which he then gives to the Prince*) Jeremiah H. Dunn, Special Reporter for the New York "Times." Now you don't know what a big thing it would be to me if you would give me an interview. Tell me how it feels to be Prince of Wales, when you think the war will end and what Princess you are going to marry and——(*He stops for breath*)

PRINCE: No, I can't be interviewed. I promised Mother before they'd let me come that I would never be interviewed but I'll tell you it's rotten to be Prince of Wales. And I never am when I can help it. Here we are just four men together.

FLANAGAN: And the German, your honor.

PRINCE: Oh yes, and the German—Five men.

FLANAGAN: (*Interrupting*) And I'll not be associating with that German at all. It's four men we are and the German.

HARRIS: Ayn't the bloody German a man? S'elp me! Where've yer got 'im?

FLANAGAN: Over there. (*Pointing to where the German prisoner sits all crumpled up against the wall with his head sunk down lower than ever as if he were asleep. As a matter of fact he is not as he has been interestedly following the conversation until attention was called to him. Harris goes over to him, followed by Dunn. They stand looking down on him*)

HARRIS: Sy! You've got the bloomin' Hun tied so tight he's fynted. (*Dunn meanwhile has put his hand in his other pocket and pulled out another batch of postal cards, he goes through them stopping over two or three and looking inquiringly at the prisoner. One particularly seems to hold his attention. The German has cast furtive glances at him and now blows out his cheeks and rumples up his forehead. The Prince moves back of Dunn and looks over his shoulder at the postals*)

PRINCE: What are these?

DUNN: These are the postcards of the German royalties. I keep them in the left pocket and the Allies in the right. Nothing like system. Now I think (*Pursing up his lips.*) I think he looks something like this one, but he's fuller in

the face. Can't see with that handkerchief tied over his face.

PRINCE: Come, Flanagan, take off the handkerchief.

FLANAGAN: (*Stands with his feet apart looking at the Prince*) Are ye, or are ye not, talking to me as the Prince of Wales?

PRINCE: I'm not, Flanagan. I've left that behind me with Haig. I'm talking to you as man to man.

FLANAGAN: Well then, as man to man, I'll see ye to the devil first. I'll not have that handkerchief off that beast's mouth. I made a vow come Thursday week never to hear the German tongue again—and that vow I'm after keeping. Any one who touches that German will account to me. And I'm willing to fight ye singly or in couples. (*He assumes a belligerent attitude*) Come on in closed or open formation or in any damned formation that suits yer.

DUNN: (*Pacifically*) There, there, Erin, Home Rule, think of it. Neutrality is our middle name. Quiet there, England. (*This to Harris who has been bristling and is prancing about with his hand in position waiting for a chance to get one in on Flanagan. Even the Prince seems a little incensed*)

PRINCE: Come—come, Flanagan. Be reasonable. (*Turning to Dunn*) You're quite right. (*With a wave of his hand toward Flanagan*) No wonder they won't let Father give Ireland Home Rule if they're all like that. (*Turning to Flanagan and speaking in a high moral Sunday School*

manner) Learn to rule yourself before you would rule others. Mother says——

FLANAGAN: (*Calming down but with a watchful eye on Harris*) Who wants to rule anybody? It's a hell of a lot of ruling your Father does!

PRINCE: (*Shaking his head dejectedly*) Quite true. They don't let Father do anything.

HARRIS: (*Stopping his belligerent intentions and becoming interested in the subject under discussion*) And why should they? I arsk. Why should they? (*Waxing vehement with the eloquence of the Park speakers*) The only bloomin' thing 'e's done on 'is own since the war began was to fall hoff 'is bloomin' 'orse. (*Waving his hands*) Now I arsk you stryght what do we want of 'im? 'E can't hexpect a nytion to be proud of 'im? 'E can't. 'E'd better tyke 'is hairin's in a bally pram, 'e 'ad.

PRINCE: (*Interrupting*) I tell you nobody could have been sorrier than Father was about that. He's laid up yet. The Mater gave him quite a talking to.

HARRIS: Betcher she gave 'im some stryte talk. She knows how to wear the "breeches."

FLANAGAN: (*Breaking in*) I'll not be after hearing you speak so disrespectful of your Sovereign. God bless him! You be after keeping a civil tongue in your head. Don't you know you're speaking of this boy's Father, and this boy's a friend of mine.

PRINCE: Thank you, Flanagan.

FLANAGAN: (*Turning to the Prince*) Don't you pay any attention to him, your Highness. Everybody knows how they go on in the Park of a Sunday. You know they're foine fighters and sound at heart, your Majesty.

PRINCE: (*Dejectedly*) I know. And they're right too. It's listening to them has made me a Socialist. If I could only be Prime Minister! But what chance have I to be Prime Minister when I'm Prince of Wales! Any boy in the Kingdom may become Prime Minister but me. Now I ask you is that fair? Is that a square deal?

HARRIS: (*Breaking in*) No, it ayn't.

PRINCE: (*Continuing*) If anything should happen to Father, then I'd have to take his place and be trotted out on State occasions like the Royal Coach in the Coronation. I have to know how to write my name to sign the laws—and that's all.

DUNN: (*He has been listening and making copious notes, every now and again looking through his postcards of the German royalties, now holds one out comparing it to the prisoner*) Say, boys, this one really looks something like him, but the name's come off.

PRINCE: Let me see. (*Takes the postcard*) Oh, that's the Crown Prince. I haven't seen the White Rabbit for years but I'd know him anywhere. The last time he visited us he made Mary and me play Adam and Eve while he was God and locked us out of the Garden. Kitchener found us walking about in the street and made him unlock the gate for us. He always hated Kitchener for that.

Mary made me promise if I met him I'd give him one where it would do the most good. I haven't met him yet, but I'm looking for him. (*At this moment consternation is cast over the group. The sound of an approaching aeroplane is heard. With one accord they dash for the opening of an underground shelter. Flanagan covers the lantern with his great coat as he runs by. The purr of the motor grows louder and louder, evidently passing overhead, then fades away in the distance. They emerge, Flanagan leading. He takes the coat from the light as he passes, which now falls directly on the prisoner and attracts his attention. He stands there pointing his finger at the German who is eyeing him with hostility*)

FLANAGAN: Faith! we forgot all about the Hun!

HARRIS: 't would have served him jolly well right if they had dropped a bomb.

DUNN: (*Interestedly, with pencil poised over pad to make notes*) How do you know that was one of theirs?

HARRIS: By the 'eart beat, lovey.

FLANAGAN: Your own, ye mean.

PRINCE: I've heard they send one out about midnight every night. (*Leaning over so the light from the lantern will fall upon his watch*) Suffering Joseph! It's a quarter to twelve and (*in a panic of consternation*) I haven't done a good deed to-day—and I must before the clock strikes twelve! Which one of you shall I do it to? (*In a belligerent tone*)

HARRIS: (*Paying more attention to the tone than the words*) Not me, your 'Ighness.

FLANAGAN: (*In a soothing voice*) Don't worry yerself, me boy. There's a lot of us haven't killed our German to-day.

DUNN: (*Speaking aloud as he writes*) The Prince of Wales kills one German a day.

PRINCE: (*Overhearing him turns in his direction*) I do not. I've vowed to do one good deed every day. I'm the head of the Boy Scouts. Baden Powell made me join. (*Rather peevishly*) Oh dear, it's only ten minutes to and none of you'll let me do him a good deed. What shall I do! (*His eye lights on the German*) I'll take the handkerchief off his mouth. (*Starting toward the prisoner with hand outstretched*)

FLANAGAN: (*Stepping in front of him with open arms to bar the way*) And I'll not be after lettin' ye do that. Didn't I make a vow only last Thursday before a saint who'd lost its head, so I don't know which one it was—though I think it was a lady. Didn't I take a vow never to hear the German tongue again? (*A rhetorical question*) Well, I did that same and I'll keep me vow. (*The Prince tries to dodge one side of him. Flanagan who is a very big man catches him by the collar and holds him quiet in front of him*)

PRINCE: We'll make him promise to speak English.

FLANAGAN: Well, even if he spoke English, wouldn't

he be using the German tongue? Seeing as how he's after being a German.

PRINCE: But I've been telling you that he can't help being a German. He was born that way. I fancy he'd rather have been born something else—a—a—

HARRIS: A bloody bloomin' Turk!

DUNN: (*Saying aloud the words as he writes them down*) All Germans wish they had been born Turks. (*Nobody pays any attention to him but the German who shoots a malevolent look at him out of the corner of his eye. The Prince looks again at his watch*)

PRINCE: Oh dear! Oh dear! Five minutes to twelve and I haven't kept my vow and no one will let me do him a good turn.

FLANAGAN: (*Lets go of his collar and looks at him sympathetically for a second*) I'll tell ye what I'll do, me boy. I'll give him to ye, for I'm after taking a fancy to ye Ye may set him free if ye want to. But he must not speak while he's in my presence. (*Grandiloquently*) I must keep me vow, and I'll not be lettin' him wag his German tongue at me.

PRINCE: (*Enthusiastically*) Oh, Flanagan, that is awfully good of you. Thank you so much. (*Looks at his watch*) Only three minutes. (*Goes and stands in front of the German, and addresses him*) Did you hear what this gentleman (*with a wave of his hand toward Flanagan*) said? (*The German nods*) Now I can let you go free in two minutes, you're my good deed—the only one I can

find. I've got to do it. Now you couldn't help being born a German, could you? (*No response from the prisoner*) Answer me. Nod. (*The German shakes his head, but does not look very pleased*) No, of course, you couldn't. I'm sorry for you and I'm going to let you free but you mustn't speak. Remember.

FLANAGAN: (*As he takes a gun and raises it to his shoulder*) If he speaks I'll shoot him, tell him. I'll take no talk from the likes of him.

PRINCE: Did you hear that? (*The German nods. During the foregoing scene the audience hears the faint purr of an aeroplane's motor and it grows louder during the following. The actors are so taken up with the freeing of the prisoner that they apparently do not hear it*)

DUNN: (*Writing busily, murmurs to himself*) The Prince of Wales is very humane and often frees German prisoners, thereby setting a good example to the Boy Scouts. (*The Prince meanwhile has gone to the prisoner and has started to untie his arms. He looks up and sees Harris standing by, doing nothing*)

PRINCE: Here, Harris, you untie his legs. (*Harris leans over and undoes the rope around the prisoners ankles, as he does so he gives the German a pinch that makes him jump. The Prince looks up just in time to catch him at it*)

PRINCE: Stop that, Harris, that's not fair.

HARRIS: 'Ave a 'eart, your 'Ighness, 'is legs're asleep. (*He leans over and takes the prisoner's hands*) Give me your clappers, my pretty. (*With a mighty pull he brings*

him to his feet, saying as he does so) Ups-a-dysie. (*The sound of a tiny bell is heard striking twelve. It is the Prince's repeater. The German stands opposite him with the handkerchief still muffling the lower part of his face*)

PRINCE: (*Saluting the German*) You are free, sir. (*The German bows to each one of the company in turn, who returns the salutation. He steps across the stage to the stairway leading to the top of the rampart, mounts them and stands but dimly seen in the light from the lantern. He pulls the handkerchief away from his mouth and blows a shrill blast upon a whistle. The aeroplane is heard very distinctly. A searchlight waves across the stage and discloses Dunn busily writing, looking up every now and then to see what is going on. The Prince and Harris stand looking at the aeroplane and Flanagan, with his gun to his shoulder, is ready to shoot if the German should speak. The light at last falls on the figure on the wall and in its strong blaze shows him to be the Crown Prince. In perfect silence he bows again to each in turn but when he comes to the Prince of Wales he puts his thumb to his nose, then grasps a rope that is evidently dangling from the aeroplane, and disappears from view. The light goes. The motors start up and their purr soon fades away in the distance. The figures stand for a moment speechless*)

DUNN: (*Regaining his senses first*) Well, well! What do you know about that? (*Turning to Harris*) It was the Crown Prince after all. I——

HARRIS: If you say "I told you so," I'll knock your silly 'ead hoff.

DUNN: Oh, I wasn't but I did. (*Harris makes a pass at him*) Oh, very well, very well. (*Begins to write busily, murmuring to himself*) The cousinly relations between the Crown Prince and the Prince of Wales have not been broken off despite the War.

FLANAGAN: (*Drops the butt of his gun to the pavement and shakes his fist in the direction of the aeroplane*) Arrah! If you'd only wagged that damned tongue of yours!

PRINCE: (*Comes to himself last and looks around saying in a whisper*) Don't any of you tell Mary.

CURTAIN

MARKHEIM

A Dramatization from the Story
of ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

By Zellah MacDonald

MARKHEIM

Original cast appearing in the first production at the Comedy Theatre, New York, April 22, 1917

CHARACTERS

THE DEALER ..... REMO BUFANO
MAIDIE ..... JOSEPHINE JEFFERSON
MARKHEIM ..... GEORGE HAYES
A VOICE ..... PENDLETON KING

Markheim

MARKHEIM—*A lean frowning face, good in its lines but evil in expression. His long lean body has yet a certain unfettered grace of carriage. His clothes though shabby bear the marks of excellent tailoring.*

THE DEALER—*A bird-like grotesque little creature with a rounded back like a robin and spiderish arms and legs with long, talon-like fingers, which by their wild flourishes and gestures proclaim a French strain somewhere. His tousled yellow mop of hair, apple cheeks, and childishly brilliant blue eyes lend a curious imbecility of expression to his face. Ripples of laughter break from him intermittently.*

CONSCIENCE—*A whimsical figure never very clearly defined, clad in a dark costume unillumined save when touched by the light of the sunbeam when it turns to pure gold. With something sprite-like in his movements he is rarely still.*

THE MAIDIE—*A vivid flash of natural color, too taken up with her own tragedy in the beginning and her lateness in the end to fully appreciate in her panting out of breath state, the deep significance of Markheim's hour.*

TIME: *From eleven to twelve on Christmas morning.*

There is the sound of Church bells, their last clamor hastily summoning to prayer the tardy who still linger along the road.

The curtain rises upon the kind of old curiosity, jewelry clock shop so common in the off streets of London. On all sides is a furious ticking of clocks, big clocks, little clocks, foolish French porcelains, and heavy mahoganys all going, ticking away at a pace at once frenzied and anxious.

To the left in a kind of little alcove is a high desk on which is placed a single dripping candle. Behind, a door ajar leads to a cavernous stairway, and to the right the room runs back to a murky doorway with murkier windows on either side heavily shuttered. The interstices are filled with curious objects, a kind of a jumble of silver candelabras, Chinese gongs, jeweled goblets, a glittering porcelain and crystal chandelier with chinking prisms whenever some wave of wind sets them in motion. In a conspicuous place two tall, sneering Buddhas with limpid glittering eyes in their foreheads. Beneath is an incense coffer.

As the eye becomes accustomed to the scene, a great empty room becomes visible above the shop. In the left, set at an angle, a door is ajar. At the back are two tall churchlike windows through one of which a single sunbeam finds its way across the room.

Above the sound of the clocks is evident a curious humming, which grows querulous and cracky anon.

The Dealer enters, dodging out from behind one of the clocks. He clambers on the high stood and from an old bag drags out a few coins. He fingers them lovingly with the feverish grasp of a miser. Then he glances at a cal-

endar marked in large letters, December 24th, which is now visible in the light of the candle he holds up.

Suddenly he tears off the top page disclosing the new one marked "December 25th," and then passing quickly to a rather large looking clock of French make, resembling a portion of the Strassburg Clock, he peers up into its face holding the candle so as to illumine it, showing the hands at two minutes to eleven. The bells are still ringing but now with a quickened wavering note as if the bell-ringer were putting extra strength into the few last pulls and giving good measure.

He replaces the candle and running to the door flings it wide, then going outside takes down one shutter and staggers in with it.

The light in the shop brightens appreciably.

A view of the terraced entrance to the church now fills the open doorway and the windows and a late comer is seen hastening up the steps in a vain endeavor to combine dignity and haste.

The Dealer pauses in the doorway as if to go for the other shutter. The Bells cease. He hurries in and takes another look at the clock.

Then with a profound bow, he addresses the Clocks.

The Dialogue begins:

THE DEALER: Good morning, my dears. Merry Christmas. (*Running up to a tall Mahogany and putting his arms around it so as to bring his ear close to the clock's long body as a doctor might sound a patient's heart*) How is the heart this morning. Pat, pat, pat. Sixty to the minute. Much better. Much better. Yesterday, ah yes-

terday, my dear, you were quite ill. (*He stands a moment regarding them, humming softly, and then hauling out a great watch he stands close to a tall lacquered grandfather clock of the seventeenth century*) Ah! (*Shaking his finger*) A touch of fever, my dear. Too much excitement. Too much excitement. You will be an invalid. I have told you. Running at that pace is not for such a frail old one as you. Ha! ha! Not so young, little lady as you used to be. Ah we're all getting old, very old. Ah yes. You cannot deny that you are the child of old Mudge, and Mudge has been dead—dead long enough to give you (*In a voice of growing solemnity and horror*) great, great, great, great, great grandchildren, my dear. Ah yes. I know. Oh it is true, too true. (*Walking to a little French porcelain bracket clock and patting its golden domed head lovingly*) Well. Well. Well. A dirty face as usual. Every morning, every single morning, there is smut on your face. And your hands, Ma Petite! (*His own large expressive hands held up in horror*) Ah! Ma Petite they are vrai horrible. (*The little clock catches its breath and there is a clutch like a sob*) Whicht! It is nothing to cry about, nothing. There, there, just a moment (*vanishing a minute to return with a bowl and a bit of old Turkish worked linen*) Just—a—minute. We will wash the roses and make them as fresh as buttercups. N'est-ce-pas? Ah, now you would not know yourself. No! Such a dainty wee face. Ah well, the others, they are so old that a smut more or less scarcely shows on their yellowed old skins. (*At this moment a clock begins to strike. The dealer wheels quickly and passionately shakes his fist at a gaunt specimen of old English days*) At it again! At it again! A fine old anti-

quated junk jumble you are. Always chattering out at the wrong time. Wrong in the head. Wrong in the head. Like me to think it was something wrong with your voice, wouldn't you. But you're out of your head. Mad, quite mad. You're no good, and I shall sell you. I won't have you here. You old decrepit. I shall sell you the very first chance. The oil I have fed you. It would keep a whole family of clocks. Oh yes. I will get rid of you. Your clothes, Monsieur are unimpeachable. Your stoop only adds to your attractiveness. I shall manage quite a sum for you. If—if they only come in when you're right in the head. (*The dealer now shuts the front case with a bang and turns to a small table clock—a squat old marble clock of rather pretentious size*) Morning, grandma. Merry Christmas. (*Then bending nearer as if to one quite deaf*) M-e-r-r-y Chr——ist—mas. Fine hearty lady aren't you? And they thought your day was over. But they didn't fool old Silverthorne. Non, non. (*He moves now to a small ebony with a beautiful old face and elegantly proportioned hands*) Happy New Year, your highness. You're so terribly dignified my dear. Merry Christmas seems quite out of place. Well, well. (*He compares its time with his own watch and shakes his head dubiously*) Never do, never do, my dear. Your hands are your undoing. So elegant and so useless. (*He runs now to the desk and produces a huge book comically out of proportion to his small self. He consults it and addresses the clock severely*) A slight chill yesterday and two minutes behind, and now to-day, a touch of fever and thirty seconds ahead. Never do. Never do in the wide—wide—world. Your face is your fortune, my dear. We'll have

to make the most of it. Ornamental, very, but for use (*Holding up his hands in horror*) No use at all. (*His attention is now attracted to an onyx, modern and vulgar*) Well, Upstart? Keeping the time all right, aren't you? Yes, to-day. But—to-morrow? Next year? Never. (*Shaking one finger solemnly*) Hurry up. Hurry up. You get out of here just as soon as you can. Oh I know you're in fashion. The latest. But out you go the first opportunity. There'll be a young dandy in here presently looking for a wedding present, and—out you go. You haven't any constitution. Can't fool with invalids and sick folk. You're asthmatic and weak already. You've got to go, Upstart. (*He stands back now and addresses them all with a kind of fatherly pride*) Now, my children, as it's Christmas morning and a holiday and you've all been good I shall make you a little present, a wonderful present. I shall give you all, yes Upstart, and you needn't snueeze over it, a—three drops of oil. Hah! Ha! I shall waste quite a fortune on you. But—you are my children. (*He starts his little song again and goes back stage picking up a bottle here and a bowl there and making quite a clatter with his mixing. Returning he proceeds to doctor the clocks. Meantime steps sound cautiously down the stairs. Timidly, cautiously, the Maidie enters from the stairway door. She is evidently getting up courage. With a little jerk she starts forward. The dealer discovers her and turns upon her swiftly. She shrinks back but quickly recovers herself*)

MAIDIE: (*Timidly*) Very Merry Christmas——Sir.

DEALER: Merry Christmas, indeed. Now I'd like

to know what you've got to be merry about. Father in jail, mother ill, and a silly sister.

MAIDIE: Oh, sir, the doctor man thinks he can cure her.

DEALER: Cure her! Cure her! Does he! Hm! Well you can tell your mother right now that people are no different from clocks. And you can't cure a clock that's wrong in the head.

MAIDIE: Oh sir, we hoped——

DEALER: Hoped. I'd like to know what right you had to hope.

MAIDIE: Oh sir, it's——it's Christmas.

DEALER: Christmas. Oh ho! Suppose you thought I'd give you something.

MAIDIE: Oh sir——

DEALER: Don't deny it. Don't deny it. You did. You came in here to ask me for a present. Hm! I don't even know that I'll give you your wages after the pot you broke yesterday.

MAIDIE: (*Beginning to cry*) Oh please, please, my mother is so ill——

DEALER: Should have thought of that before you broke it. *I* can't pay for your mother being ill, can I? Wages indeed. How much do you suppose is left out of this month's or next month's or the month after for that matter after breaking my best boiling pot? What are you hanging round for?

MAIDIE: Oh sir, it was cracked and—oh my poor mother, I—I promised I'd bring her something, I——(*The dealer has picked up a small dagger and as he notices that the clock is about to strike he flourishes it wildly*)

DEALER: Whicht! Whicht! Be quiet. They're going to strike! (*The Maidie draws back, startled. Then in chorus all the clocks strike out the hour, some racing ahead, some looming out, some high, some low, some rough and masculine, some sweet and silvery. Then the big clock chimes out a carol while very faintly like the hidden silvery music of elves, a music box clock is playing a dainty minuet*)

MAIDIE: O sir, isn't it beautiful?

DEALER: (*Brusquely to cover his emotion*) Beautiful! What do you know about beauty? (*She shrinks back*) Now what are you hanging around for? It will soon be twelve o'clock and if you're late I'll—I'll take some more off next week.

MAIDIE: Oh but—Sir (*Then with tremendous courage*) Oh if you'd just give me my wages now. I—I wanted to take my mother—It's her cough, Sir. It's—Christmas.

DEALER: Spend it, would you? Much better for you not to go spending it on foolishness.

MAIDIE: (*In a sudden passionate flare of temper*) It's none of your business whether—(*But the Dealer threatens her with the dagger and she hustles out dropping her bag just inside the door.*)

(*Left alone the Dealer returns to his clocks. He buries*

his head and shoulders in their works and produces strange strokes and squeaks and groans from them. All the while he continues humming. Markheim for the last few seconds has been peering in at the window. He now enters and seeing the Maidie's bag upon the floor picks it up greedily. The Maidie re-enters, casts one quick anxious glance around and bursts into tears)

MAIDIE: Oh Sir, my bag. All I had. Only tuppence but I'd wanted to take something to my mother. She's ill. And now I've lost it. Ah, Sir, help me to find it. (*Markheim's shame is visible in his face. He stoops as if finding the bag and picks it up*)

MARKHEIM: What's this?

MAIDIE: Oh thank you, Sir, thank you. The little mother guard you from all evil, Sir. (*She runs off. Markheim enters into view of the dealer. His face grows darker and more forbidding. The Dealer hears someone coming and rubs his hands together. Markheim's eye is caught by a goblet and he deftly pockets it*)

DEALER: (*Excitedly*) You come, Monsieur, at the identical moment. (*He waves to the clocks*) The curtain is up. The play is about to begin.

MARKHEIM: (*Sinisterly*) I come on business.

DEALER: Of course. Of course, but having come on business you have time for a little pleasure. Ha! Ha! It is a holiday. I feel in a holiday mood. I will—I will show you my treasures. Ha! Ha!

MARKHEIM: (*Eagerly*) You have things of great value here. I hope you know how to take care of them.

DEALER: Take care of them! Ah, Monsieur, I know clocks as the priest knows souls. They are just like people. Cranky to-day, fast to-morrow. They have their colds and their fevers. And twice a day—twice every day they put their hands up so (*he holds his hands up, palms together*) and say their prayers. Oh, they are wise things, clocks are. And—they have a soul, Monsieur. Ah yes. Listen, you can hear the beat of them. Do you know what it is, Monsieur? It is the beat of a human heart echoing here. Ah, yes. And when a clock stops—do you know what I say? I say—somewhere a heart has stopped also. Oh yes. It is a strange thing. And when they bring me their clocks and they cry, "Monsieur, your clock is not good. It will not go." I say, "Madame, Beware! There is something wrong with your heart."

MARKHEIM: "And where your heart is there shall——" And you, you have a heart of iron, you keep all these clocks going. Do they never stop?

DEALER: Never. Unless—unless someone puts a feather in the works. Old Peter—Hush! It is going to play now. See! (*He stands back admiringly as the old clock is about to strike the quarter. Out of the little trap come two figures, one gaily belaboring the other. It is a little pantomime and the figures make the semicircle of the little platform and retire, the one in a reclining position, felled by the blow of the other*)

MARKHEIM: A neat stroke! (*Seemingly unconscious*

he picks up the dagger with which the Dealer has threatened the Maidie)

DEALER: A very old device. Peter Thompion built it. (*Bitterly*) Clocks in Peter's day were not merely to keep time. They were a part of the family.

MARKHEIM: (*Raising the dagger*) A clean stroke. (*The Dealer springs back in alarm*)

DEALER: Monsieur, Monsieur. Take care. Take care. That is not a toy such as they play with in clocks. One must not confuse the play with the reality.

MARKHEIM: No? Let the play proceed. (*He lowers his arm but does not relinquish the dagger*)

DEALER: The play? The play? We have played enough. It is time for business.

MARKHEIM: (*As if suddenly resolved*) Yes. Let us to business.

DEALER: (*Eyeing the lump in his pocket*) You bring something. Our windfalls you see are of various kinds. Some who come are ignorant, and then—I profit by my superior knowledge. Some are dishonest, and in that case I touch a dividend on my virtue.

MARKHEIM: I come (*He pauses slightly and his hand tightens on the dagger*) not to buy but to get.

DEALER: So? Ah it is well you come to me on Christmas Day. I am alone in my house—(*Markheim looks up eagerly. It is evident the point is not lost on him.*) My shutters are up. I make it a point of refusing business——

MARKHEIM: (*With an evil expression*) The matter was somewhat urgent. (*He does not meet the Dealer's eyes*)

DEALER: Well you will have to pay for that. And I will make you pay for my loss of time when I should be balancing my books. You will have to pay for a kind of manner which I remark in you to-day strongly. I am the essence of discretion. I ask no awkward questions but when a customer cannot look me in the eye he has to pay for it.

MARKHEIM: Pay? (*Muttering*) Yes. One of us pays.

DEALER: Ha. Ha. You can give as usual a clear account of how you came into possession of the object? Still your uncle's cabinet? A remarkable collector, sir.

MARKHEIM: (*Scornfully, his scheme is so much bigger*) This time, I assure you, you are in error.

DEALER: So?

MARKHEIM: I have not come to sell. I—I come to purchase. I have no curios to dispose of; my uncle's cabinet is bare to the wainscot. I—I have gambled well (*His eyes wander round the room taking note*) and should more likely add to it than otherwise. My errand to-day is simplicity itself. (*The Dealer nods his head from side to side as at an old story. He glances as usual toward his clocks. Markheim suddenly with a quick movement jams a tall clock by thrusting his hand behind him into the peep hole of the pendulum*)

MARKHEIM: I seek a Christmas present for—one of

whom I think a great deal and (*ingratiatingly*) of course I owe you every excuse for disturbing you upon so small a matter. But the thing was neglected till now. As you very well know a wealthy future is not a thing to be neglected.

DEALER: (*Soberly weighing Markheim's words and nodding to his clocks in final agreement*) Well Sir, be it so. You are an old customer after all (*with a wink at the clocks*) So, so. A rich marriage. If you have a chance to marry wealth far be it from me to put an obstacle in the way. (*Markheim draws a quick breath as if relieved*)

MARKHEIM: If I am not mistaken the tall clock has stopped. (*The dealer turns and Markheim quickly closes the shop door*)

DEALER: No. No. (*Running forward feverishly*) It cannot be. It has not stopped for fifteen years. The old Knibbs. (*He becomes absorbed in the clock. Markheim with a quick desperate lurch starts forward with the dagger, but his hand falls inert and he leans back aghast. His courage fails*) Ah! It is a feather in the works! Old Peter has done that. He said he would. (*Triumphantly*) It is all right now.

MARKHEIM: (*Bitterly*) Then, sir, your heart can beat a little longer. It can enjoy these many treasures. What a fortune you have here.

DEALER: No. No. (*Suspiciously*) I do not gather these for nothing. I tell you, sir. Do you think I buy for nothing? And nowadays the world is too well edu-

cated. Ah yes. A Fromantell brings a great price. They know their value. They haggle. Haggle over a Fromantell. Ah, it is not art—it is a business. (*Fussily*) But to business. I must waste no more time. A gift for a lady. I think there is something here. (*The dealer turns. The candle wavers and nearly goes out. While the Dealer is bent over a case, Markheim gathers himself again. He stiffens his arm, wavers, and starts forward only to fall back again*)

THE DEALER: (*Turning*) Here is a nice thing for a lady, fifteenth century, warranted from a good collection too; but—I reserve the name; in the interests of my customer (*chuckling*). He was just like you, my dear sir, the nephew and sole heir of a remarkable collector.

MARKHEIM: (*Stretches out his hand and receives a mirror in which he shrinks back from his own face*) A mirror! For Christmas! Never!

DEALER: So! And why not? Why not a mirror?

MARKHEIM: You, you ask me that? Look here, look in it—look at yourself. Do you like it? Do you want to see it? No! Nor I—nor any one.

DEALER: (*Humping back at the almost sinister gesture and then perceiving that nothing was meant, he chuckles*) Your future lady, sir, must be pretty hard favored.

MARKHEIM: (*With sudden passion*) I asked you for a Christmas present, and you give me this—this damned reminder—this hand conscience! Did you mean it? Had you a thought in your mind? Tell me. (*Threateningly,*

the dagger in his hand) It will be better for you if you do. You are alone in this house. Alone with these treasures.

DEALER: (*Suddenly shaken with suspicion*) No. No. It was a mistake. I—I am expecting a friend at any moment. He—he may be here now. Make your purchase and begone. I am a charitable man but I do not like your looks. So!

MARKHEIM: (*Sarcastically; trying to recover himself*) Charitable? (*With a grating laugh*) Oh, I would hazard a guess now that you are a most charitable man.

DEALER: You came to buy. Buy then and begone. I must—must return to my clocks.

MARKHEIM: (*Realizing that the time has come for action*) Not charitable? Not pious, not scrupulous, unloving, unbeloved, a hand to get money, a safe to keep it? Is that all? Dear God, man, is that all? (*Markheim reels a little, shaken by passion*)

DEALER: (*Greatly relieved*) Ah, ha. I see—that this is not a love match of yours and—you have been drinking the lady's health.

MARKHEIM: (*Playing for time, and toying with the glass so that it reflects the light into the Dealer's eyes and disconcerts him*) You have been in love. Ah! Tell me about it.

DEALER: *I* in love? I never had the time, nor have I the time to-day for nonsense. Will you take the glass?

MARKHEIM: (*Enjoying his discomfiture*) What is the

hurry? It is pleasant to stand here talking; and life is so short and insecure, that I would not hurry away from any pleasure; no, not even from so milk a one as this. (*The Dealer begins to sense something sinister in the air, hastily shuts the case and moves toward the door, but Markheim forestalls him. Though the Dealer does not hide his shock at the sight of the closed door he evidently nerves himself to get rid of his customer*) We should cling, cling to what little we can get, like a man at a cliff's edge. Every second is a cliff, if you think upon it—a cliff a mile high—high enough, if we fall, to dash us out of every feature of humanity. Therefore, it is best to talk pleasantly. Let us talk of each other; why should we wear this mask? Let us be confidential. Who knows, we might be friends. (*All the while the hand behind him is stiffening and relaxing as if on it alone depended the blow*)

DEALER: I have one word to say to you, my anxious friend. Either make your purchase or walk out of my shop. So!

MARKHEIM: True. True. Enough fooling. Show me something else. (*The touch of pantomime which follows shows both on the watch for the opportunity. The Dealer fusses among the cases keeping his face carefully and alertly turned toward Markheim. Once as he turns a trifle, Markheim makes a dash and raises his hand and then a trembling takes possession of him and he walks part way to the door only to return quickly, still determined. The Dealer looks up enquiringly and Markheim, to cover his mistake, sets a flare to the incense in the censor beneath*

the Buddha) Well. Well. You shall pay for my good incense——

MARKHEIM: But surely.

DEALER: Are you a follower——

MARKHEIM: No. But I would make sure that my gift would be appreciated. (*As the Dealer stoops, he moves nearer*)

DEALER: Well. Well. Let us finish our business. Ah, now surely I am successful, this time, see—(*He looks up a moment, his hands busy in the case*)

MARKHEIM: Ah yes. One moment—(*He stoops again to lift it gingerly from the case*)

(*But Markheim hesitates no longer. He draws a little nearer shaking in every limb, fills his lungs, his arm stiffens, body and face become a study in resolve, fascination and physical repulsion. Through a haggard lift of his upper lip his teeth show clenched. His hand rises and as quickly falls part way behind him. The Dealer glances up*)

DEALER: Voila. I have succeeded. Here is what you wish——(*And suddenly Markheim faces the up turned face, finding it easier that way, and—the long skewer-like dagger flashes and falls hawk-like upon his victim. The Dealer struggles like a hen, striking his temple on the shelf and then thuds heavily to the floor in a heap.*

The Pantomime begins:

Markheim slinks back, shuddering. The silence can be felt, the ticking of the clocks seems to gain in intensity. He starts. There is the pit, patter of a child's footsteps on

the pavement. Markheim begins to be afraid. The candle quivers as in a draught, causing the long shadows to heave over the room and the faces of the gods to quiver and blur. The blots of shadow expand and shrink as if breathing. The inner door is ajar and from it come strange creaking sounds. Markheim drags back his shrinking gaze to his victim. Is there not something paltry in it after all? He moves and the tassel of a Chinese gong raps him smartly on the shoulder. He starts and looks around furtively. It is like the hand of the constable. Markheim is afraid. Suddenly the clocks all begin striking, some fast, some slow, one ringing on its treble notes the preludes of a waltz. It is the first quarter. He moves quickly toward the candle. Time flies. He must ransack the house and get away. He tries the desk. Gathers up the few miserable coins it contains and looks at them reflectively. Was it for this? No. This is but a taste of the treasure hidden somewhere. He turns in other directions, candle in hand, and every moment brings him face to face with his own image in a mirror. The place is full of them, and from all corners his own nerveracked face glares back at him. He shrinks back, terribly shaken. Now and then he snatches up something—a strange curio, something bizarre, his very bulky selection showing the over-balanced condition of his usually clear-sighted mind. The eyes of the Buddha blink suddenly as if alive. A goblet in his hand crashes to the floor. He makes a quick movement toward the cabinet, anxious to be gone. Suddenly with a shrinking gesture he nerves himself to touch his victim. He must have the keys. In Markheim's face is not remorse—only fear, unreasoning, gripping, superstitious fear. His nerves are jerking

automatically. He pauses listening. There is a distant murmur as of many people saying a mass. Silence. Tick, tick. He gets up. It is getting on his nerves and in a frantic moment he stops the big clock. The sudden cessation is so marked he shrinks from it and then frantically sets it going again. He has recalled the remark of the Dealer about his clocks. Once again he turns upon his victim. The Dealer lies like a thing of sawdust. Markheim grips him distastefully. He is light and supple in his hands. There is a momentary glimpse of the ghastly face smeared with blood, then a quick jingle as he falls in a heap. Markheim darts back. He has the keys. Suddenly there is a knocking at the outer door. Someone is hammering, clamoring to get in. He pauses petrified with horror. It's the Dealer's expected friend)

VOICE WITHOUT: Silverthorne! I say, Silverthorne. (*Rap, rap, rap, quick and impatient as with some hob-nobbed cudgel. A jolly old gentleman is visible at the door. Markheim shrinks back into the shadows, quivering in every limb*) Merry Christmas, Silverpricks. Let me in. Let me in. I'm coming in. See if I don't. You're mad because I'm late, but I'm still in time to hear the Clocks. Oh, yes, I am. I'm——(*silence*) I'm coming to the other door. (*The footsteps retire to the other door past the window. In a sudden wild panic Markheim snatches the candle and charges up the stairs. As the light recedes from the lower room and only the panting of the clocks is heard, now and then, come odd creakings and ghostly murmurings as if something were moving in the old shop. From now on the light begins to appear in the upper room, first as a shadow in the hall where its wavering and flickering*

and drunken shadows mark Markheim's trembling and hurried progress, and forming as he rises a long bar into the room through the open part of the door which forms with the sunbeam a palid cross in the shadow. Markheim staggers in above. Suddenly the blows of the old gentleman are heard on the door which opens from the stairway hall.)

VOICE OF THE JOVIAL GENTLEMAN: (*In evident disappointment*) Good old Silverpricks. You know I always come on Christmas. I'm coming in. Indeed I am. (*In an excess of panic, Markheim flings to the door and puts his body against it. A moment passes, Markheim lifts his head. The gentleman has evidently gone away. Suddenly Markheim shrinks back from the closed door, new terror in his face. On the back of the door is a mirror. Once again Markheim's mirrored face glares back the horror in his own. Tramp, tramp, something is heard coming up the stairs. Markheim is terror stricken. His eyes remain fixed on the mirrored face, which the audience cannot quite see. Suddenly high up in the mirror, a head is pushed through at about the height of a knocker, a whimsical kindly wizzened face which might be that of some age old gnome, or some old fashioned child with shaggy hair, looks out at Markheim*) *The Dialogue begins*:

MARKHEIM: Who—who are you? (*Conscience withdraws and then suddenly comes through the picture, a wavering uncertain figure*)

CONSCIENCE: Don't you know?

MARKHEIM: What—what do you want? (*Conscience*

enters through the mirror, a slight dark figure illumined only when by chance he steps into the sunbeam, when his Pierrot-like costume save for a long cloak changes to pure gold. Seen through a quivering vapour even his outline is a little uncertain—like something seen through water. He suggests in this respect the appearance of the Buddhas after the murder)

CONSCIENCE: You are looking for the money. (*Markheim is speechless*) I must warn you. The Maidie has left her mother earlier than usual. It was not a happy Christmas. And she will soon be here. If you, Mr. Markheim, be found in this house, I need not describe to you the consequences.

MARKHEIM: You—you know me—by name?

CONSCIENCE: For many years I have known you, Markheim, and have often wanted to help you.

MARKHEIM: Are—are you the Evil One?

CONSCIENCE: Does it matter? I am here to render you a service. What matter who I am?

MARKHEIM: What matter? Be helped by you? Never! Not by you! You—you do not know me if you think so.

CONSCIENCE: Markheim, I know you to the soul.

MARKHEIM: It is impossible. Who can? I am a slander on myself. I am not what the life I have lived would lead you to think me. No man is. We are all better than the disguise that grows about and stifles us. You see men dragged away like one whom bravos have seized and muf-

fled in a cloak. If we could do as we would, if you could see our real faces, they would be altogether different. They would shine out like heroes and saints. I am worse than most, it is true, but my excuse is known to me and God. Had I the time I could make you understand.

CONSCIENCE: Me!

MARKHEIM: (*With passionate fury*) I have been born and I have lived in a land of giants; giants have dragged me by the wrists since I was born out of my mother—the giants of circumstance. Can't you see that I am that thing which must be as common as humanity itself—the unwilling sinner and—and *you would judge me by my acts.* (*Markheim buries his face in his hands*)

CONSCIENCE: (*Breezily*) Very feelingly expressed. But —I have no interest in argument. I care only that people should walk in the right direction. But——Time flies; the servant delays, every moment moves nearer, and remember, it is as if the gallows itself was striding towards you through the Christmas streets. See, I will help you. Here is the treasure. You would never find it alone. (*And suddenly with a leap Conscience produces a key and fitting it into a hole in the wall slings open a secret closet. The treasure pours in a magnificent brilliant stream on the floor. Gold, silver, coins of every denomination, tiaras of diamonds and garlanded chains of burning gems of every color and lustre. Markheim heaves a great sigh of intense desire and then drops upon the floor greedily gathering the treasure. At this moment from downstairs the clocks strike the quarter hour and a soft single peal of chimes breaks the silence*)

MARKHEIM: (*After a pause*) The price? What must I pay you for this?

CONSCIENCE: Pay me? Nothing. It is a gift. A Christmas gift.

MARKHEIM: (*Bitterly*) Nothing were more expensive. (*Suddenly drawing back*) No. I cannot take it. I will take nothing from you. You cannot understand it but—I will not deliberately commit myself to evil.

CONSCIENCE: Why as for that, there—there is always the eleventh hour. One may confess then. Take it. See riches for a life time. Think! Later you may confess and be absolved. Now wealth, happiness, pleasure.

MARKHEIM: (*With intense scorn*) And you believe in that?

CONSCIENCE: Oh, I did not say so. But—I came but now from such a death bed. The room full of sincere mourners listening to the man's last words and when I looked into that face which had been set as a flint against mercy I found it smiling with hope. I am not a hard master. Try me. Accept my help.

MARKHEIM: And you think I am such a creature. You think I would sin and sin and sin and then sneak into heaven. (*Suddenly*) Is it because you find me red handed in sin that you suggest this thing? Has my one crime of murder (*He shudders visibly*) changed my whole nature? Am I no longer capable of any good action?

CONSCIENCE: Murder is in no special category. For me

all sins are murder even as all life is war. I live for evil but for me it consists not in action but in character. The bad man is dear to me, not the bad act whose fruits if we could follow them hurtling down the cataract of the ages might seem more blessed than those of the rarest virtues. (*The voice rises and grows melodious*) It is not because you have killed a dealer, that I offered to forward your escape but—because you are Markheim.

MARKHEIM: You judge me well. Let me tell you. This is my last crime. I had to do it. But in the doing, I learned many things. Poverty drove me to it. I didn't want to do it. But where a man cannot get honestly he must take. Perhaps I was weak, weaker than others might have been, but the weakness is my character.

CONSCIENCE: (*Sadly and lovingly*) You are Markheim.

MARKHEIM: I wanted pleasure. I thirsted for it. Is that wrong? But to-day I am rich. I go out of here a master of poverty. Now it is my slave. I am free, free to be myself, Markheim—Markheim a man who loves good, whose heart thrills at homely love and virtues; when I was a child I sat at a good mother's knee. I learned of good men; I had tremendous aspirations. But (*with a kind of a sob*) Life got me, and held me, and squeezed me as in a vise and I—I had to have. I could not live without having. So—I took. But now—now—I understand. And now, I shall go soberly. (*And turning to the treasure he begins to load it into his pockets*)

CONSCIENCE: And this money? What will you do first?

MARKHEIM: To-morrow, I shall go at once to the Exchange. I shall make it double.

CONSCIENCE: Double? But have you not lost thousands there already?

MARKHEIM: Ah, but this—this that I would try—is sure.

CONSCIENCE: No. This time also you must lose.

MARKHEIM: But—I do not throw all. I keep back the half.

CONSCIENCE: No. Not even the half. That also will go.

MARKHEIM: Well, then what matter! Say it is lost. Say, I am again thrown into poverty. Shall it master me? Shall Markheim be conquered? Is he all black? Shall the evil side forever dominate? No. The good in me is there, and it shall, it must win. My heart is not hardened. I am kind to the poor. And it still glows at honest laughter. I have a happy soul. I have had to-night my chance. I played and I lost, but poverty shall not make me into a thing beyond all semblance of a man.

CONSCIENCE: (*Slowly and solemnly, his figure more indistinct than ever*) For six and thirty years you have lived in this world. Through many changes of fortune and varieties of humor I have watched you, watched you steadily fall. (*During this speech music is heard in the chapel across the way and the Largo rises like a prisoned thing straining, beating, to be free*) Fifteen years ago you would have started at a theft. Three years ago you would have blanched at murder. Is there any crime, is there any

cruelty or meanness from which you still recoil? Downward, downward lies your way, nothing but death can stop you.

MARKHEIM: (*Rising slowly, the treasure dripping unheeded from him*) It is true. I have made partnership with evil. And yet—(*Passionately*) Am I different from others? Do not all suffer and tarnish under their surroundings? Can any find pure air?

CONSCIENCE: Markheim, I would ask you one question. You have grown in all things more lax, possibly your life is accountable for that. Men do. But, granting it, are you in any one particular, however trifling, more difficult to please with your own conduct?

MARKHEIM: (*Backing toward the wall as if for support*) In any one? No. (*Despairingly*) No. I——I have gone down in all.

CONSCIENCE: Then be content. Your part is written. You will not change. Being what you are, Markheim, your life is irrevocably written down. (*There is a tense silence, terrible in its significance to Markheim who bows under the weight of the accusation. He is like a man who has braved until numbness overtakes him.*) You had better take the money. It is time to be gone.

MARKHEIM: (*Pleadingly*) Have I no chance of mercy? Is there not grace? I—I have heard of it?

CONSCIENCE: (*After a pause*) Have you not tried it? Two or three years ago did I not see you where they ex-

horted to save sinners and was not your voice the loudest when they sang hymns?

MARKHEIM: Yes. I see. I understand. I thank you from my soul. My eyes are opened. I behold myself at last as I am. I am what I am. My part is indeed irrevocably written down. I see what I must do. (*Suddenly the sharp note of the door bell rings through the house*)

CONSCIENCE: (*In panic haste*) The Maidie! She has returned! There is only one thing to do. (*The Largo has fallen until it can barely be heard*) Tell her, you must tell her, her master is ill. Let her in with an assured but easy countenance. Don't smile. Don't overact. You can succeed. Once she is within the same dexterity that has already rid you of the Dealer will do it. No danger then remains in your path.

MARKHEIM: (*Thoughtfully*) It is possible? (*With a strange eagerness, a tremendous resolve, Markheim gripping the dagger with which he has killed the Dealer, the treasure spilling unheeded from his gorging pockets, flings open the door and descends. Conscience remains, waiting, and for a moment his wavering features seem to steady and there is visible a woman's face of infinite compassion. Markheim reappears below and though he brings no light, light enters with him and illumines the shop. At the last moment he pauses as if bracing himself for some great act. The knock of the Maidie sounds impatiently from without*)

VOICE OF THE MAIDIE: (*Without*) O please, please, Sir, let me in. I—I will—I will never be late again. Indeed I will not. Before the little mother I say it. (*The Largo*

swells up triumphantly and drops again. Markheim flings wide the door. The Maidie appears on the threshold and hesitates at sight of him, she is out of breath and tearful. Markheim's arm is ready. His eye watches his opportunity)

MARKHEIM: Come in.

MAIDIE: (*Still hesitating*) Is—Is he very angry? I ran all the way. Indeed I did. (*She still hesitates*)

MARKHEIM: He is not angry. Come in. (*The Maidie advances a little fearfully. Markheim stretches out his left arm and quickly closes the door*)

MAIDIE: It is all so still. Oh he must be very angry. (*Markheim's arm is ready. He moves quickly forward. She suddenly clutches him and gazes into his face*) I feel as if something terrible were going to happen. I—I am afraid. (*Markheim's arm flies up with the dagger but pauses in mid-air. The dagger falls clattering to the floor. The Maidie springs back—wonder in her face and a dawning fear*)

MARKHEIM: (*Flinging wide the door. His whole body undergoing a quick revulsion*) You—You had better go for the police. I—I have killed your master. (*For an instant the Maidie gazes at him horror, growing in her face; then with a sudden movement she turns in full flight. Left alone Markheim with folded arms awaits what is coming. Running feet sound down the street. The Largo rises triumphant, and suddenly like a human applause, the clocks ring out their chimes and carols. Solemnly at the end twelve long strokes ring out and in the moment of pause which follows, the*

CURTAIN DESCENDS

THE HOME OF THE FREE

A Comedy

By ELMER L. REIZENSTEIN

THE HOME OF THE FREE

Original Cast appearing in the first production at the Comedy Theatre, New York, April 22, 1917

CHARACTERES

JOHN CALVIN BURKE ..... PENDLETON KING
FELICIA HEMANS BURKE ..... ALETHEA LUCE
ROBERT INGERSOLL BURKE ..... MILTON WEINHANDLER
GENEVIEVE SWEET ..... DOROTHY NICHOLS

The Home of the Free

SCENE: Living room in the home of the Burkes. At the rise of the curtain, Mrs. Burke is discovered seated at the table, industriously darning socks and humming "The Rosary" in a high falsetto. Robert is lounging in an armchair, reading the "Masses." From time to time he yawns audibly, but, after each yawn, he shakes himself angrily and glues his eyes to the page.

ROBERT: (*Suddenly putting down the magazine*) Mother.

MRS. BURKE: Yes dear?

ROBERT: I'm expecting Genevieve presently.

MRS. BURKE: (*Interested*) Oh, how lovely!

ROBERT: (*Annoyed*) I wish, mother, that you would overcome your habit of making inappropriate and irrelevant ejaculations.

MRS. BURKE: (*Contritely*) I'll try, dear.

ROBERT: She's stopping here on her way home. I told her to bring me something to read from the library and—

MRS. BURKE: And I haven't a thing in the house to offer her!

ROBERT: Why do you always find it necessary to evince your affection for people by stimulating their gastric juices?

MRS. BURKE: But, Robert dear—

ROBERT: (*Interrupting her*) What I wanted to say is, that as Genevieve can't stay very long and as there's something I want to talk with her about, I wish you'd clear out as soon as she comes.

MRS. BURKE: But I can't very well——

ROBERT: Yes, you can. All the members of Genevieve's family are in perfect health; the weather is mild and promises to continue so; she bought her new hat at Madame Dupont's and they haven't succeeded yet in getting a cook.

MRS. BURKE: (*Anxiously*) What are you going to talk to her about, dear?

ROBERT: (*In utter amazement*) Why, what a question!

MRS. BURKE: I know I shouldn't ask. Still——

ROBERT: Still what?

MRS. BURKE: I can't help feeling that it's not quite right for you to talk to Genevieve about things that daren't be discussed in my presence.

ROBERT: Daren't? It isn't a question of daren't. It's a question of psychology.

MRS. BURKE: (*Dubiously*) Oh!

ROBERT: I realize that owing partly to inherited characteristics and partly to your faulty education——

MRS. BURKE: (*Sighing*) Yes; I know dear.

ROBERT: Oh, it isn't your fault. You were never taught the meaning of liberty.

MRS. BURKE: I'm afraid you're right, dear. I've tried so hard to learn, but I was brought up with the idea that duty is the most important thing in life.

ROBERT: Oh, duty! I hate that word!

MRS. BURKE: I'm so sorry dear.

ROBERT: Oh, I'm not blaming you.

MRS. BURKE: Thank you, dear.

ROBERT: But the fact remains that you are a little—a little—well, let us say, old-fashioned. Consequently, there are certain topics which I refrain from discussing in your presence, because I understand that your somewhat unfortunate hereditary and environmental background has rendered you incapable of agreeing with me.

MRS. BURKE: That's sweet and dear of you, Robert. Still, Genevieve is a young girl——

ROBERT: (*Proudly*) Genevieve is a New Woman. And it is I who have made her a New Woman.

MRS. BURKE: Yes, that's just it. It's because she's so very new. If she were a little older——

ROBERT: I can't listen to any more of this, mother. I've been very patient with you, but, really, these objections are an unwarranted intrusion upon my liberty. As father says,

this household is founded upon the principle of unqualified freedom—freedom of thought, freedom of speech and freedom of conduct.

MRS. BURKE: I know, dear, and I try to live up to it. But, sometimes, it makes it so difficult for one to say and do what one would like to.

ROBERT: (*Magnanimously*) Well, we'll say no more about it. (*He goes back to the "Masses"*)

MRS. BURKE: (*After a pause*) Robert, dear.

ROBERT: (*Ostensibly annoyed but secretly pleased by the interruption*) Well?

MRS. BURKE: Have you ever thought of marrying Genevieve?

ROBERT: (*Very much provoked*) Marrying Genevieve! What put that into your head?

MRS. BURKE: Nothing. Except that I think she'd make a lovely match for you.

ROBERT: (*Disgusted*) Match! You talk like Queen Victoria at her worst.

MRS. BURKE: Well, you know what I mean. She's a nice, quiet girl and you've known each other since infancy. It's almost like a family affair.

ROBERT: Do I understand that you're deliberately trying to inveigle me into a marriage with Genevieve?

MRS. BURKE: Of course not, dear. But you seem so fond of each other, that I thought——

ROBERT: What has that to do with it? Do you think I'd allow myself to be influenced by a mere sentimental attachment?

MRS. BURKE: Not altogether, of course. You've too much common-sense for that. But Genevieve's parents are well-to-do, and——

ROBERT: Oh, mother!

MRS. BURKE: I'm sorry, dear.

ROBERT: (*Angrily*) This is really inexcusable—your attempting to force Genevieve upon me. It's an unwarrantable infringement of my liberty.

MRS. BURKE: Forgive me, Robert. It was only for your good——

ROBERT: (*Pacing the room*) You've upset all my plans.

MRS. BURKE: (*Rather alarmed*) What plans?

ROBERT: You've endangered my whole future.

MRS. BURKE: (*Anxiously*) What is it, dear?

ROBERT: (*Facing her*) The reason I wanted to speak to Genevieve alone this afternoon is that I might have an opportunity to ask her to marry me.

MRS. BURKE: (*Greatly relieved*) Oh, I'm so glad!

ROBERT: Now I shan't do it.

MRS. BURKE: (*Amazed*) Why not?

ROBERT: Because I feel that it is no longer a free choice. The whole thing has degenerated into a romance.

MRS. BURKE: Nonsense, Robert; no one would ever accuse you of being romantic.

ROBERT: (*Brightening somewhat*) You think not?

MRS. BURKE: I'm sure of it. Just you go on and propose to Genevieve without paying the slightest attention to my wishes in the matter.

ROBERT: I'll think it over. You have given me a rude blow. You have forced me to the conclusion that domestic life is incompatible with the principle of freedom. (*Shaking his head gravely*) Yes, I'm afraid that the family must go.

MRS. BURKE: (*Gently reproachful*) I've promised to go, dear, as soon as Genevieve arrives.

ROBERT: (*Pityingly*) Poor mother, I'm afraid we shall never make a new woman of you. (*The door bell rings*) There's Genevieve.

MRS. BURKE: I'll just pass the time of day and then I'll slip out.

ROBERT: (*Generously*) Very well. (*Genevieve enters from the street, carrying several books. She is about twenty and looks like the kind of girl who reads Henry James and likes him*)

GENEVIEVE: Good afternoon.

MRS. BURKE: (*Going to her*) Why, my dear! I'm so glad to see you. (*She goes impulsively to Genevieve and is about to kiss her, then recollects herself*) Oh, excuse me, dear! I forgot! Let's shake hands, then. (*She extends her hand*)

GENEVIEVE: No, I've decided to omit hand-shaking, too. I read yesterday that the bubonic plague can be communicated by mere contact.

MRS. BURKE: But I haven't the bubonic plague!

GENEVIEVE: How do you know?

MRS. BURKE: (*Crushed*) Well, really——

GENEVIEVE: Hello, Robert.

ROBERT: Did you get me something to read?

GENEVIEVE: Yes. (*She hands him a book*) I've just finished it.

ROBERT: (*Looks at the book and grunts*) Is it any good?

GENEVIEVE: (*Enthusiastically*) It's charming! I enjoyed every word of it.

MRS. BURKE: What is it, dear?

GENEVIEVE: "Survivals of Cannabilism in Tasmania."

MRS. BURKE: (*Resignedly*) Oh!

GENEVIEVE: The author describes among other things how he was captured and almost cooked before his party rescued him.

MRS. BURKE: (*Delighted*) Now I understand!

GENEVIEVE: Understand what?

MRS. BURKE: What Mr. Burke means by half-baked authors. I never had the courage to ask him, because I

don't like to show my ignorance. (*Genevieve and Robert look at each other pityingly*) Well, Genevieve dear, I hope that all your family——

ROBERT: (*Warningly*) Mother!

MRS. BURKE: Oh, yes, I forgot! You really must excuse me, dear. I've—I've dozens of socks to darn. (*Hastily*) Most of them are Mr. Burke's. Robert is very easy on clothes. (*Seeing that Robert is beginning to fidget*) Well, I really must go. You'll excuse me, won't you?

GENEVIEVE: Certainly.

MRS. BURKE: That's a lovely hat. Where did you—— (*Rather pettishly as she remembers*) Oh yes, of course. This freedom is getting stricter all the time. (*She goes out leaving the socks behind*)

GENEVIEVE: I hope you haven't been scolding your mother again, Robert. I find her delightful—a little old-fashioned, but so interesting. I'm writing her up for my sociological seminar. I'm demonstrating that her type occupies relatively the same place in the evolution of the Woman Movement that the Neanderthal man occupies in the evolution of the human race. Original, isn't it?

ROBERT: (*Abstractedly*) Very.

GENEVIEVE: (*Annoyed by his indifference*) You don't seem at all interested.

ROBERT: (*With determination*) Genevieve, there's something I want to ask you——

GENEVIEVE: (*Interested at once*) Yes.

ROBERT: Something I've been wanting to ask you for a long time. (*He stops*)

GENEVIEVE: (*After a pause*) Well—what is it, Robert?

ROBERT: Can't you guess?

GENEVIEVE: Why no!—I haven't the slightest idea.

ROBERT: Genevieve will you—will you be the mother of my children?

GENEVIEVE: (*Hastily*) Do you mean will I marry you?

ROBERT: (*Rather coldly*) If you want to put it that way. We shall go through whatever idle legal ceremony you may desire. *I* attach no importance to the law——

GENEVIEVE: (*Quickly, in the manner of a school-girl who knows the right answer*) That's from Shaw, isn't it?

ROBERT: (*Annoyed*) Well, you needn't snap me up like that.

GENEVIEVE: When shall we be married?

ROBERT: There's no hurry about that.

GENEVIEVE: No, of course not; three or four weeks from now will be soon enough. This is all so unexpected. Oh, you dear boy! (*She goes to him impulsively and is about to kiss him*)

ROBERT: (*Stopping her*) Genevieve! Remember what you told me about the transmission of pulmonary diseases.

GENEVIEVE: (*Dejectedly*) Yes, of course! How stupid of me to have forgotten. (*She walks away from him*)

ROBERT: (*Rather disappointed*) On the other hand, we must recognize the compelling voice of the Life Force.

GENEVIEVE: (*Brightening*) Oh, certainly. We can't ignore the Life Force.

ROBERT: The Life Force, it seems to me, must transcend everything.

GENEVIEVE: I think so, too.

ROBERT: Even the laws of hygiene, do you think?

GENEVIEVE: (*With conviction*) Yes, even the laws of hygiene.

ROBERT: Well, then—(*He kisses her several times. They both seem to enjoy it*)

ROBERT: (*Drawing away at length*) We mustn't become sentimental, Genevieve.

GENEVIEVE: There's no danger of that.

ROBERT: We mustn't descend to mere vulgar love-making.

GENEVIEVE: You do love me, don't you?

ROBERT: I can't say that I do——

GENEVIEVE: (*Alarmed*) Robert!

ROBERT: I believe that love is a fiction created by the second-rate poets of the nineteenth century. I believe that Tennyson——

GENEVIEVE: But, Robert——

ROBERT: I am a blind tool in the grip of the Life Force.

The Life Force has paralyzed my will. I am its slave. I do whatever it impels me to. (*He kisses her*)

GENEVIEVE: (*Relieved*) Oh, that's all right. (*An automobile is heard coming to a stop*)

ROBERT: That's father.

GENEVIEVE: I suppose—I suppose you're going to tell him.

ROBERT: Perhaps.

GENEVIEVE: He won't object, will he?

ROBERT: Object! I should like to see him try! But there's no danger of father's objecting. He's all for freedom. Are you going to tell your parents.

GENEVIEVE: Oh, I've told them already. (*Hastily*) That is—of course, I'll tell them! I must go now. It's late.

ROBERT: There's just one point. I don't want to be consulted about—about whatever arrangements are to be made. I regard my consent to any ceremony at all as a sufficient surrender of my liberty to relieve me from the annoyance of planning the details.

GENEVIEVE: (*Sighing*) Very well. I suppose I'll have to do it then. Let me see, there was something I wanted to ask you. Oh yes, I remember now. (*She hesitates*)

ROBERT: What is it?

GENEVIEVE: You said something about—about children.

ROBERT: Of course.

GENEVIEVE: Had you thought of them at all—in the way of numbers.

ROBERT: Well, I should say five.

GENEVIEVE: Five?

ROBERT: As a maximum.

GENEVIEVE: Oh! Yes, five will be all right as a maximum. Well, I must really go. (*Expectantly*) Good-bye.

ROBERT: (*Kissing her*) We mustn't make a practise of this sort of thing.

GENEVIEVE: (*Kissing him*) Certainly not. (*Burke enters*)

BURKE: Oh, I beg your pardon! (*He is about to withdraw*)

GENEVIEVE: (*Stopping him*) I'm just going. Good afternoon.

BURKE: Good afternoon, my dear. (*He looks after her thoughtfully*)

ROBERT: (*Bursting out*) Well, father, I'd like to know what you mean by tearing in here like that.

BURKE: I'm very sorry. I didn't know there was anyone here. (*He is plainly disturbed about something*)

ROBERT: Life in this house is becoming intolerable. One can't have a moment to oneself. Why, I'd have more privacy in state's prison.

BURKE: I shall not attempt to defend myself by the ob-

vious means of pointing out my inalienable right as a free and responsible agent to enter and leave this room when and how I please——

ROBERT: Oh, well if you're going to be tyrannical about it——

BURKE: As I said, I shall not discuss the point because—

ROBERT: But I have the right to have it discussed.

BURKE: And I have the right to refrain from discussing it. There is——

ROBERT: This is nothing short of despotism.

BURKE: Will you do me the kindness of holding your tongue for a moment? I've a matter of importance to talk to you about.

ROBERT: Don't tell me to hold my tongue! There's nothing of more importance than my liberty. Herod!

BURKE: (*Getting angry*) Keep quiet!

ROBERT: Nero!

BURKE: (*Bellowing*) Shut up!

ROBERT: Shut up yourself! Machievelli!

BURKE: (*Inarticulate with rage*) I'll—I'll——

ROBERT: Bismarck! Napoleon! Henry the Eighth! Ivan the Terrible! Northcliffe! Rockefeller!

BURKE: (*Capitulating*) Well, well, all right. Go on and say what you have to say and when you've finished give me a chance.

ROBERT: I have nothing to say. But I insist upon my right to freedom of speech.

BURKE: I concede you that right. Is there anything else?

ROBERT: Nothing. And now that you have conceded my right, I am willing to permit you to exercise yours. Proceed.

BURKE: Thank you. I want to talk to you about Genevieve.

ROBERT: (*Displeased*) Genevieve?

BURKE: (*After a moment's hesitation*) Yes. I thought that as I came in I saw you kissing Genevieve. (*He stops*)

ROBERT: Well?

BURKE: Did I?

ROBERT: That is a question which it is impossible for me to answer.

BURKE: What do you mean?

ROBERT: How do I know whether or not you saw me kissing Genevieve?

BURKE: Well, were you kissing her?

ROBERT: I decline either to challenge or to corroborate the testimony of your senses.

BURKE: Robert, I want to know whether there is anything between you and Genevieve.

ROBERT: By what right do you ask that question?

BURKE: By no right; but——

ROBERT: Very well. As a mere matter of courtesy, then, I don't mind telling you that Genevieve has consented to become my mate.

BURKE: Do you mean your wife?

ROBERT: (*Annoyed*) Well, I suppose it will come to the same thing.

BURKE: I was afraid of it!

ROBERT: Afraid?

BURKE: Yes. Robert you must make up your mind to relinquish Genevieve.

ROBERT: I'm afraid I don't understand.

BURKE: You must give her up. Marriage between you is out of the question.

ROBERT: I really don't follow.

BURKE: I can't explain. It's impossible—that's all.

ROBERT: That isn't all by a long shot. How do you mean impossible?

BURKE: I mean simply that you can't marry Genevieve.

ROBERT: Why?

BURKE: Because—because—well, because I forbid it.

ROBERT: (*Ominously*) Forbid?

BURKE: Yes.

ROBERT: If this is a joke, I consider it very ill-timed.

BURKE: It's not a joke. I never was more in earnest in my life. (*As Robert is about to explode*) Listen to me for a moment. Have I ever, within your memory, forbidden you to do anything?

ROBERT: (*Belligerently*) I should think not.

BURKE: Exactly. You were brought up on the principle that a human being is a free agent; that the aim of human life is unrestricted self-expression and that unqualified freedom of thought, speech and conduct is the sine qua non of an endurable existence. I have never in the least degree attempted to curtail your liberty. Even when you were an infant, I insisted, at the cost of interminable colloquies with your mother and the neighbors, upon your right to cry whenever you elected to do so.

ROBERT: Well, what's the good of going into all that?

BURKE: Merely to convince you that I would not lightly oppose or attempt to restrain any wish or desire of yours. But, in this instance, I regard the obstacle to your marriage to Genevieve as of sufficient importance to over-ride, for once, my principles, and to justify my arbitrary refusal to permit the marriage to be consummated.

ROBERT: Father, I've listened to you with a great deal of patience—with more patience than I would have given myself credit for possessing—because I have observed from time to time that misguided and deplorable as your conduct usually is, it is always actuated by praiseworthy motives. But if you think that any attempt upon your part

to oppose my marriage to Genevieve will meet with anything but a militant response, you do my self-respect an injustice.

BURKE: Then you refuse to break your engagement to Genevieve?

ROBERT: Not only do I refuse to break the engagement, but, instead of marrying her three weeks from now, as was my original intention, I shall marry her to-morrow. (*Looking at his watch*) By thunder, I'll do it to-night!

BURKE: (*With determination*) Very well. There is nothing left for me then, but to tell the truth.

ROBERT: Well, go ahead. But I assure you that whatever it is, it won't have the slightest effect upon me.

BURKE: (*Clearing his throat*) Robert, freedom has always been the key-note of your life. You were suckled at the sacred fount of——

ROBERT: But why go over all that again?

BURKE: So that you will not allow your judgment to be colored by your passions when you hear what I have to tell you. In your life, respect for tradition has played no part. You have been taught, and rightly, to scoff at laws, at regulations, at social conventions, at antiquated codes of morality. These things are but chains which bind us to the dead past. In order to be free we must strike off these shackles——

ROBERT: (*Interrupting*) For the love of Haeckel, why do you always talk as though you were in Cooper Union?

BURKE: I'm simply trying to remind you that while I was inculcating this spirit of liberty in you, I, of course, reserved to myself the right of freedom of conduct—the right of self-expression——

ROBERT: For pity's sake, get to the point!

BURKE: You cannot, therefore, be very greatly surprised to learn that Genevieve is your half-sister.

ROBERT: (*Thunder-struck*) My——!

BURKE: Yes.

ROBERT: (*Furious*) You—you——

BURKE: (*Holding up a warning hand*) Robert, remember!

ROBERT: (*Trying to control himself*) Of course. It's rather sudden, you know.

BURKE: (*After a moment*) Well, what have you to say?

ROBERT: (*Gulping hard*) Nothing. Except that it's damned unfortunate that your self-expression had to take the form of Genevieve.

BURKE: Needless to say, marriage is out of the question.

ROBERT: Of course. (*Querulously*) It seems to me, father, that you might have considered me just a little more.

BURKE: (*Apologetically*) You were very young at the time. I'm genuinely sorry about it, but——

ROBERT: Well, there's no use talking about it. It should

be a lesson for you for the future, though. Are you going to tell mother?

BURKE: Well—er—I wasn't exactly planning to.

ROBERT: She's got to know it.

BURKE: Why?

ROBERT: Because I told her that I was going to ask Genevieve to marry me.

BURKE: Can't you say that Genevieve refused you?

ROBERT: (*Haughtily*) Do you think that even a credulous woman would believe that Genevieve refused *me?*

BURKE: Tell her I'm opposed to the marriage.

ROBERT: She knows that wouldn't have the slightest effect upon me.

BURKE: (*Rubbing his chin*) This makes it very awkward.

ROBERT: Are you afraid to tell her?

BURKE: (*Bristling*) Afraid? Certainly not. But your mother is—well—just a little old-fashioned and she may not see things just as you and I do.

ROBERT: Do you think—(*The door opens*)

BURKE: 'Sh! Here she is now. (*Mrs. Burke enters*)

MRS. BURKE: Good evening John. May I come in?

BURKE: Just wait a few minutes, Felicia. (*She is about to go out again*)

ROBERT: No, come in, mother.

BURKE: No, wait!

ROBERT: Come in, I tell you.

MRS. BURKE: (*Who has been bobbing back and forth*) Well, what *am* I to do? I'd like to get those socks, if it's possible.

ROBERT: There's no use putting things off, father.

BURKE: (*With a sigh*) Very well.

ROBERT: Come in, mother.

MRS. BURKE: Thank you, dear. (*She goes to the table and resumes her darning*)

ROBERT: (*After an awkward pause*) Father, I'll talk to mother. I'm more tactful than you. Just leave us alone together.

BURKE: (*Rising*) Thank you, my boy. (*He is about to go*)

MRS. BURKE: Dinner is at seven, John. Try to be ready. (*Holding up a sock*) And I wish, dear, that you wouldn't insist upon giving your toes so much liberty. It's awfully hard on your socks.

BURKE: Yes, of course. (*He throws a last look at Robert and goes out*)

ROBERT: (*After a moment*) Mother, there's something I want to talk to you about.

MRS. BURKE: Yes, dear. Is it about Genevieve?

ROBERT: Yes. (*He stops*)

MRS. BURKE: Did you ask her?

ROBERT: Yes.

MRS. BURKE: And she—?

ROBERT: Accepted, of course.

MRS. BURKE: (*Effusively*) Oh, how lovely! I congratulate you, dear. She's just the girl for you. I hope you'll be very happy.

ROBERT: (*Stopping her*) I have just learned that it is impossible for me to marry her.

MRS. BURKE: Why, what do you mean?

ROBERT: I'm going to tell you. It's a little difficult for me to explain——

MRS. BURKE: I'm completely bewildered, Robert.

ROBERT: As you know, mother, father and I are very liberal in our views. We believe in absolute and unqualified freedom. To us society's taboos and restrictions are but so many barriers between the individual and the expression of his will. It is our belief that all mob-imposed standards of conduct and codes of morality should be swept aside.

MRS. BURKE: Yes, but I don't see——

ROBERT: I'm coming to that. Father and I have from

time to time endeavored to convert you from your—well, let us say, old-fashioned way of thinking to our own broader views. But without success.

MRS. BURKE: I'm so sorry, dear. I've really tried to——

ROBERT: Don't mention it. I'm not blaming you. But the point I want to make is that you should not be surprised or shocked to learn of conduct on our part which you would regard as—shall we say—unconventional.

MRS. BURKE: (*Worried*) Why, Robert what have you been doing?

ROBERT: It doesn't concern me. It's father.

MRS. BURKE: (*Relieved*) Oh, I'm glad of that.

ROBERT: It is natural, in view of what I have been saying, that father has now and then, over-stepped what your conservative mind regards as the limits of propriety.

MRS. BURKE: I suppose so.

ROBERT: So that it needn't be a matter of great surprise to you to learn that the reason that I can't marry Genevieve is that—that—that——

MRS. BURKE: Yes.

ROBERT: That she—that is to say, that father—because I —I—father——

MRS. BURKE: Whatever is it, dear?

ROBERT: (*With a great effort*) In a word, Genevieve is my half-sister. There! I've told you!

MRS. BURKE: You mean——?

ROBERT: Exactly.

MRS. BURKE: Oh! (*She darns thoughtfully*)

ROBERT: You mustn't be too hard on father——

MRS. BURKE: No, no. (*After a pause*) About your marriage with Genevieve, dear.

ROBERT: That's out of the question, of course.

MRS. BURKE: Not at all.

ROBERT: What?

MRS. BURKE: Go on with your plans just the same.

ROBERT: But mother, you don't seem to understand. Genevieve is father's daughter.

MRS. BURKE: I understand dear. But that doesn't matter.

ROBERT: Doesn't matter? Why it makes me her half-brother!

MRS. BURKE: (*Quietly*) No it doesn't.

ROBERT: What?

MRS. BURKE: It's quite all right, dear. I assure you that there is no relationship whatever between you and Genevieve.

ROBERT: (*Almost speechless*) You mean I'm not——

MRS. BURKE: Just so.

ROBERT: Well!!!!! (*He sinks into a chair, completely overcome*)

MRS. BURKE: (*Darning quietly*) You see dear, it was the fault of my education. I had always been taught that it is a wife's duty to live up to her husband's principles. (*She sighs*) Oh, dear, I wonder if I shall ever finish these socks. (*A pause*) I always thought that girl had John's nose.

THE CURTAIN FALLS

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